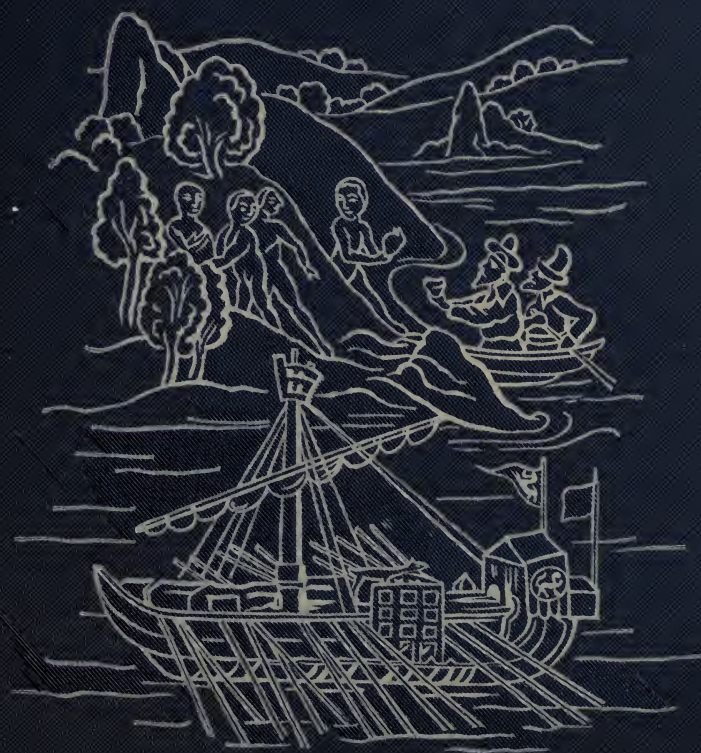


# The Last Voyages of the Admiral of the Ocean Sea





BERKELEY  
LIBRARY  
UNIVERSITY OF  
CALIFORNIA











# THE LAST VOYAGES

OF THE

## ADMIRAL OF THE OCEAN SEA

As Related by Himself and His Companions

BY  
CHARLES PAUL MAC KIE

The more we discuss the undertaking and meditate concerning it, the more do we recognize how great has been this your achievement; and that you have shown a greater wisdom therein than it was ever thought possible any mortal could possess. Please God that the future may equal what has been begun!

FERDINAND AND ISABELLA TO COLUMBUS, Sept. 5, 1493



CHICAGO  
A. C. McCLURG AND COMPANY

1892

COPYRIGHT,  
BY A. C. MCCLURG AND CO.  
A. D. 1892.

---

*All rights reserved.*

E 111  
M 15

TO

My Father

*A SMALL RETURN FOR MUCH ENCOURAGEMENT*





## PREFACE.

---

IT is not consistent with that spirit of justice which is the inheritance of the true American that any man, however long dead, should be condemned unheard, or upon a partial record. Few among the men of action of his time left such ample declaration both of purpose and performance as did Columbus, yet none has been more mercilessly assailed upon *ex parte* evidence. Weighty names have of late asked the world of students to accept their individual estimates of the great sailor's character based upon their presentation of his aims and actions, treating his own utterances as insignificant or untrustworthy. Were we limited to the chronicles of his life and deeds as apprehended by contemporary or later historians, this method might be necessary ; but happily the case is otherwise. The letters and reports of Columbus are neither scanty nor difficult of access, and there is no good reason apparent to us why the reader should not be enabled to form his conclusions at first hand. There is no occasion for treating as a mystery the open book of this man's life, for he himself knew neither reserve nor artifice in its inditing. Of him it may in truth be said, that out of his own mouth is he to be judged.

The story of Columbus, as we know it, is sharply divided into two epochs, — the twelvemonth which covers the Discovery, and the fourteen years which succeeded it. The goings



and comings of the Genoese sailor offered so little to distinguish them from those of his colleagues, before his name was connected with a preëminent exploit, that even the microscopic investigations of a Harrisse have failed to reconstruct the life of Columbus prior to 1492. Had we that volume of "Reminiscences" which the Admiral wrote in his later years, the story of his earlier days might be told with satisfactory fulness. In the absence of all but fragmentary allusions, that story must remain imperfect. It is, after all, from the years following the Discovery that an adequate conception of the Admiral's personality under varying conditions is to be gained, and it is, consequently, the more welcome that the blanks in this portion of his history are relatively so few.

In the attempt we here make to set before our readers the motives and actions of the Admiral and Viceroy, as distinguished from the finder of San Salvador, we have limited ourselves to the materials left by the participants themselves, leaving to each reader the apportionment of applause or censure as to him may seem fitting. The familiar chronicles of Oviedo, Gomara, and Bernaldez (the *Cura de los Palacios*) are but rarely drawn upon; Herrera is seldom quoted, for he merely paraphrased Las Casas, — however much modern historians may quote him as an original authority; Ferdinand Columbus is not deemed a first-rate source of knowledge except for the Fourth Voyage; and Peter Martyr only when relating what he directly gathered from conversations or correspondence with the Admiral and his associates. Benzoni, of course, is discarded as of no weight for this period or anything relating to it, and the mass of contradictions attributed to Vespucci is taken for what it is worth. The greater portion of our narrative is drawn immediately from the writings of Columbus and some of his associates, as collected by Navarrete and scattered through the history of Las Casas.

As a measure of justice to our readers, we have in all cases made our own translation direct from the originals of all material used. We know that the speech of Columbus was strongly tinged with Portuguese, and the effects of his long residence among that people are equally apparent in the extreme rudeness and compression of his written language. This often lends vigor to his expressions, but sometimes obscures his meaning ; hence more than usual care is needed in converting his phrases. Selections from his writings have been done into English by Major and Kettell ; but neither of these versions is easy of access to the general reader, and we do not assume to disparage the scholarship of either learned translator in saying that, for any serious purpose, their renderings are quite inadmissible. If any writer is worth quoting at all, he is worth quoting correctly, and harm enough has been already done the cause of honest history by drawing hasty conclusions from erroneously reported premises.

ENGLEWOOD, N. J.,  
October, 1892.







## CONTENTS.

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. NEW LANDS BEYOND THE SEA . . . . .	11
II. FOUNDING THE GREAT MONOPOLY . . . . .	32
III. THE BEGINNING OF EMIGRATION . . . . .	50
IV. THE ISLANDS OF THE CANNIBALS . . . . .	72
V. A BITTER DISILLUSION . . . . .	92
VI. TAKING ROOT . . . . .	111
VII. THE VICEROY'S FIRST REPORT . . . . .	126
VIII. THE BEGINNING OF CONQUEST . . . . .	142
IX. IDENTIFYING ASIA . . . . .	163
X. THE REVOLT OF THE TRIBES . . . . .	186
XI. THE PENALTY OF DEFEAT . . . . .	205
XII. INVESTIGATION AND VINDICATION . . . . .	227
XIII. PLANNING NEW DISCOVERIES . . . . .	249
XIV. SEEKING THE GREAT SOUTH LAND . . . . .	278
XV. "THESE LANDS ARE ANOTHER WORLD" . . . . .	298
XVI. FROM PARADISE TO INFERNO . . . . .	322
XVII. PRODIGAL MAGNANIMITY . . . . .	340
XVIII. THE FAITH OF PRINCES . . . . .	359

CHAPTER	PAGE
XIX. THE TRIUMPH OF INTRIGUE . . . . .	382
XX. THE AMEND POLITIC . . . . .	404
XXI. ANTICIPATING MAGELLAN . . . . .	427
XXII. AN INACCESSIBLE OCEAN . . . . .	450
XXIII. THE GREATEST PERIL OF ALL . . . . .	474
XXIV. "I HAVE DONE ALL I COULD" . . . . .	496





## THE LAST VOYAGES OF THE ADMIRAL OF THE OCEAN SEA.

---

### I.

#### NEW LANDS BEYOND THE SEA.

“WHEN I had undertaken this enterprise and gone to discover the Indies, I proposed in my mind to go personally to your Holiness [when I returned] with an account of all that had happened. There arose at that time a dispute between the King of Portugal and the King and Queen, my sovereigns; the King of Portugal declaring that he also intended to send out on that course to discover and win lands in those parts,—and so he stood upon his rights. The King and Queen, my sovereigns, thereupon sent me in haste upon the task of discovering and winning everything, and so my journey to your Holiness could not be effected.”

Thus succinctly did Columbus, writing in after years to Pope Alexander VI., epitomize the events of the six months of hurried intrigue and feverish preparation which elapsed between his arrival from “the Discovery,” as, for the sake of distinction, he termed his first voyage, and his departure upon the second. Yet no period of his career was so crowded with incident and excitement, and at no time did he occupy so preëminent a place in the minds of princes and people, as during the half-year he dismisses in this summary fashion.

The *Te Deums* and *Non Nobises* had been chanted by the choristers of the Royal Chapel at Barcelona; their Majesties had indicated by acts of pointed condescension the esteem in which they held their new Admiral; the complaisant Court had hastened to follow the example thus unmistakably set, and the thoughts of high and low alike were turned towards the regions of boundless hope and promise which so unexpectedly were opened to the arms and ambition of the twin kingdoms of Aragon and Castile. Little did the hungry placemen, the adventurous soldiers of fortune, or the hardy seamen of the day care whether the new-found lands were Cathay or Cipango, Farther India or the Golden Chersonesus, the Asiatic continent or a group of unnamed islands off its coasts. One thing was patent: Don Christopher Columbus had crossed and recrossed the Ocean Sea in safety and most palpably demonstrated that but a short month's sail lay between the Pillars of Hercules and the countries "where the spices grew," where "the temples and palaces were sheathed with planks of gold." The rare fabrics of silk and golden broidery, the gems and carven ivories, the perfumes and incense which the luxury-loving Spaniards had seen and admired in Court pageant and church ceremonial, or looted in the Moorish palaces of Alhama and Granada, had come, as all men knew, from the hazy confines of the distant East; and were not these the realms now seized and garrisoned for the Crown of Spain by the Admiral and his fortunate command? Nothing more natural than that all should be eager to extend the discoveries thus happily made, and derive some share either of profit or glory from the prosecution of the new crusade. The triumphant conclusion of the wars of Granada had left the south of Spain filled with a multitude of restless spirits sighing, like later Alexanders, for other worlds to have at and plunder; and, lo! as by a miracle, their dearest wish was gratified, and the whole Antipodes of Earth were offered them for the taking.

The stupendous exploit had broken upon them all as a surprise. Except a few of the more observant placemen at Court and some hundreds of unimportant subjects in the



maritime districts of Andalusia, none had borne in mind the sailing of the Genoese captain the year before with his modest equipment of caravels. Now he was returned, with a tale the like of which even the Moorish romancers could not rival. Had it been merely the story of some crew of inventive sailors, recounting to hearers who could not gainsay them the marvels of a voyage to unknown shores, the credulity of the vulgar throng would have been jeered at by the politer circles who knew so much better. But this Señor Colon, or Colombo as he was sometimes called, had not scrupled to write more than one report teeming with the wonders of his recent voyage, — to the King and Queen, to Santangel, the royal treasurer of Aragon, to Sanchez, the comptroller of the royal finances, and to others of equal eminence ; and these reports were not only most sincerely credited by the sovereigns and their learned men, but they had been instantly printed and passed into general circulation. Therefore were the learned, polite, and vulgar together soon possessed of all the facts concerning this astonishing Discovery ; and the conceptions held by all, as to the new lands beyond the Western Ocean, were grounded upon the statements of Columbus himself as he had promulgated them in the letters prepared upon his homeward voyage.

Little wonder that their contents excited the enthusiasm of widely different classes of society. Here is what they read, or had read to them, of the great island, over yonder in the Indian seas, which the new-made Admiral had discovered and christened the Spanish Isle : —

“Hispaniola is a marvel ; the sierras and forests, plains and prairies are so comely and fertile for planting and sowing, for raising cattle of all kinds, for the building of cities and settlements. The seaports would not be credited in Europe without being seen, and the rivers are many and wide, with good water, most of them carrying gold. Here are great mines of gold and other metals.”

In this fair region Nature had been lavish in her gifts : —

“The trees are of a thousand varieties and appear to reach the skies. From what I understand they never lose their foliage, for I saw them as green and beautiful as in the month of May in

Spain. Some of them bear flowers, others fruits, and others neither, according to their kind. The nightingale and a thousand other birds were singing there when I was travelling, in the month of November. There are six or eight different varieties of palms, which it is a delight to see, so various is their beauty, and even more so the other trees and fruits and herbs. There are marvellous pine forests, and vast meadows, and honey, and many kinds of birds and fruits, all very unlike. In those lands are many mines of metals, and people beyond count."

The inhabitants of this paradise were not of a sort to offer impediment to any scheme of conquest or aggrandizement which the Spaniards might set on foot.

"The people of these islands and all others of which I had news go naked as the day they were born. They have neither iron nor steel, and no weapons at all, nor are they fitted to use them. They have no arms other than the stalks of canes at seed-time, to which they fasten sharpened bits of wood, and they do not dare to use even these; for it often befell that I sent two or three of my men ashore to some village to communicate with the natives, and a great crowd would come out to meet them, and as soon as they drew near would take to flight without waiting for father or son. They are timid past hope. The truth is, that as soon as they become quieted and lose this dread, they are so guileless and generous with what they possess that it will not be believed unless it is seen. They never say 'no' to a request for anything they have; rather do they offer it to one, and show such affection that they would give away their hearts. Whatever is given them, whether it be of value or of no account, they are satisfied. I had to prohibit the sailors giving them such common things as a bit of a broken pot or of broken glass, and such like; for one sailor traded off a needle for two and a half ounces of gold, and for new copper coins they would give all they had, even to two or three ounces of gold or one or two arrobas of cotton yarn. Even the pieces of iron hoops they would accept, and give in exchange everything they had, like fools, until I had to put a stop to it, for it seemed ill to me."

All these fair lands, with their hordes of gentle savages and promise of fabulous wealth, had been annexed by Columbus to the domains of Ferdinand and Isabella, and a garrison left therein in token of possession and as an earnest of immediate return.

“These countries are richer than I know how to say, and I have taken possession of them all for their Majesties, who can now dispose of them in the same manner and as completely as they do of these Kingdoms of Castile. In this Hispaniola, in the most convenient place and best neighborhood for the mines of gold and for all kinds of commerce,—both with the continent over here [Europe] and that out there, of the Great Khan, where there will be great traffic and profit,—I have also taken possession of a large city which I have named Navidad, and in it have built a fortress and keep, which by this time should be entirely finished. In it I have left enough people for the purpose, with arms and artillery and supplies for more than a year, and a barge and a shipmaster competent to work in all the crafts; and have established friendship with the King of that country to such a degree that he prided himself on calling me and treating me as a brother.

“Even if the natives should change their disposition and wish to harm our people, neither the King nor his subjects know what arms are, but go naked, as I have said, and are the most timid people in the world.”

No stronger appeal could have been made to the spirits and passions of the daring subjects of Ferdinand and Isabella. Strange lands beyond an unknown sea, a child-like race of defenceless beings, gold thrust upon the newcomer by the handful, vast regions of dazzling wealth to be explored and won. These were no travellers' tales, moreover, for there were the tawny children of the Indies following the Admiral in his progress through Southern Spain, and with them were borne chains and ornaments of massive gold, birds of resplendent plumage, beasts of unheard-of shapes, and scores of the curious products of an unfamiliar Nature. That were a campaign better worth the waging to cavalier and man-at-arms than any offered in the Pyrenees or Calabria; and those were fairer havens for the mariner to seek than any that lay within the orbit of the Midland Sea or down the parched shores of Western Africa. So there was like to be no lack of men for the return voyage to the new-found Indies.

In those presumably serener regions of the Court where Statecraft waited upon Royalty, the eager gratification inspired by the news of this latest acquisition to the grow-

ing power of Spain was tinctured with a jealous fear lest, after all, the broad ducats which Castile had adventured in the brilliant schemes of the Genoese navigator had not merely paved the way for Portugal to reach the Orient by a shorter route than any heretofore attempted. The rivalry between the two nations of the Peninsula, to reach by sea the countries of Prester John and the Grand Khan, dated from early in this century. Both competitors were hampered by the grave doubts which existed as to just where the teeming treasures of the East were to be found in the boundless expanse of ocean which lay outside the Straits of Gibraltar. No such anxiety had beset the Venetians, who had thus far controlled the traffic with the Orient: their ships sailed peacefully down the Mediterranean to Aleppo or Alexandria and there received the precious bales which had been brought up the Persian Gulf or the Red Sea. But the task set the geographers and mariners of Portugal and Spain when, early in the fifteenth century, their sovereigns determined to explore the Western Ocean, was far more arduous. Had they possessed no maps at all, it should have been easier, for such as they had served only to perpetuate error and lend it a false authority. No one knew whether lands, seas, or Chaos lay south of the equator. As to the West, there was greater certainty: out there lay the Sea of Shadows and the confines of Earth itself. It is to the credit both of monarchs and seamen that a beginning was ever made to maritime discovery in the face of the vast mass of traditional terrors accumulated in the course of a thousand years of intellectual stagnation. But roving priests and merchants told alluring tales of the fantastic wealth of Asiatic and African potentates, while Venetians and Moors spread through Spain and Portugal the love of beautiful things and the things themselves, until the western nations would no longer take their luxury at second hand and resolved to seek its source. There was an East, beyond a peradventure; and within its nebulous precincts lay India and Cathay, Cipango and Ceylon, and the Javas, — Major and Minor. Outside of these great kingdoms was ocean; therefore, since Venice commanded the only accessible routes by land, by ocean must the East be sought.

Hence both Spanish and Portuguese began to grope outside the gates of the Mediterranean. They followed naturally the southern trend of the African coasts, blown sometimes far out to sea by easterly gales. Some of the bolder souls headed straight out into the West in search of the lost islands of the monkish legends and Arab chronicles. Thus the Spaniards sailed along the African coasts and discovered the Canary Islands; only to be surpassed by the Portuguese in a series of voyages which, for their hardihood, deserve a larger share of popular fame than they are likely to receive in view of the more romantic achievements which so soon succeeded them. The Azores, Madeira, and the Cape de Verd Islands were discovered and seized, and the African headlands were passed in succession, as voyage followed voyage, until the Cape of Good Hope was reached four years before Columbus landed on San Salvador. Here the Portuguese had paused, on the very threshold of the Orient. The merchants of Seville and Lisbon maintained a certain traffic in gold and negro slaves with the tribes of Guinea and the Congo, but Spain and Portugal alike were as far as ever from the spices and priceless fabrics of the lands beyond the Ganges. Absorbed in their Moorish wars, the Spaniards had all but withdrawn from the rivalry, and what advantage there was thus far remained with Portugal, for she established a few forts along the vast extent of the African littoral and asserted a monopoly to all navigation in that direction.

It was at this juncture that Columbus made his notable contract with Ferdinand and Isabella and started westward across the Ocean Sea in search of a direct route to India. He had, as we know, taken part in several voyages to the Guinea coasts under the auspices of the Portuguese Crown, and the experience thus gained stood him in good stead on more than one occasion on his own Discovery. Familiar with the aspirations of Portugal in respect of an independent path to the Indies, he had kept inflexibly upon his guard, when his services were transferred to Spain, against the treachery or subtlety of his quondam associates. That there was need for such caution was abundantly shown both on his

outward voyage, when he had to manœuvre to escape the Portuguese squadron sent to intercept him off the Canaries, and on his return, when he so narrowly escaped seizure by the Governor of the island of Santa Maria in the Azores. A fortnight later, when the foundering "Niña" staggered into the Tagus, and her commander was received, as an Admiral of Castile returning from the Indies, by the Portuguese King, the latter was loth to believe that the voyage had been made across the Western Ocean and plainly intimated his belief that Columbus had reached his goal by sailing around Africa. If the new Admiral were telling the truth, Spain had outwitted Portugal and won the race to the Orient. This King John would ascertain for himself, and meanwhile do his utmost to deter any more Spanish squadrons from following up the advantage.

A hint of this purpose reached Columbus as he lay at anchor in the Tagus, and he hastened to transmit it overland to his sovereigns, while he made all speed with his little ship from the doubtful safety of Lisbon to the surer haven of Palos. From here he wrote again to Ferdinand and Isabella and received their reply on reaching Seville, as he journeyed towards Barcelona to make his report in person to the King and Queen. The royal missive in one paragraph lauded the Admiral's achievements in the voyage just finished, and in the next urged him to hasten the preparations for his return to the regions he had discovered. "As you know," his patrons wrote, "the summer has already begun and, in order that the season for returning to those countries may not be lost, see whether you can do anything in Seville, or the other places you may visit, to advance your return." No reference was made to the schemes of Portugal; but the omission did not signify that Ferdinand and Isabella were ignorant of or indifferent to them. They had already taken measures to meet any attempt at interference on the part of their neighbor with a weapon whose thunder drowned that of the loudest lombards on the Portuguese decks, — the menace of St. Peter.

The letters dispatched by Columbus overland from Lisbon could not have reached the Court at Barcelona before



the 25th of March. Five weeks later, on May 2nd, 3rd, and 4th, Pope Alexander VI. issued at Rome his famous Bulls by which all the world which lay beyond a line drawn from Pole to Pole, four hundred miles west of the Azores, "in the direction of India or of whatever other parts," was declared to belong to the Spanish Crown by virtue of the discoveries made by its Admiral. The promulgation of these formidable decrees could not be a matter of indifference to Portugal, since she held her exclusive right to navigate to the eastward by a similar tenure granted in 1471; that is, "by the authority of Almighty God, to us [the Pope], through St. Peter granted, and of the Vicariate of Jesus Christ which we exercise over the Earth." Consequently Portugal, in plotting to traverse the projects of Spain in the West, was not only incurring her wrath but that of the Vatican as well, and, as the Bull proclaimed, "the anger of the Omnipotent and of the Blessed Apostles Peter and Paul." The conjunction was, assuredly, a sufficiently threatening one, but King John proposed to brave it, cost what it might.

Columbus himself reached Barcelona about the 20th of April; the exact date is uncertain. Las Casas tells us that, after his dazzling reception by the King and Queen, the Admiral was daily in close consultation with their Majesties, relating to them all the incidents of his explorations, informing them of the natural resources of the islands visited, and inspiring them with his own enthusiastic beliefs and aims concerning the policy to be pursued in the near future. Ferdinand and Isabella entered into all of his plans with an abandon of which we find no other vestige in the earlier or later history of their well-regulated lives,—unless it be in the zest with which they maintained the Inquisition. They fully shared their Admiral's confidence that Cuba and Hayti were within easy sail of the Spice Islands and Cathay, and unreservedly pledged him their support in the prosecution of his great project for placing the control of the Indian trade in the hands of Spain. At these conferences the details of the comprehensive scheme were debated and adopted, and by the 1st of May all the



energies of the government were engaged in the task of dispatching an adequate armament to continue the work so auspiciously begun. This second expedition was to be no mere handful of exploring caravels. It was to be so constituted as to provide for all contingencies, — to repel any attempt that might be made by Portugal to prevent its departure or disperse it while on the voyage; to convey a large body of colonists to settle in Hispaniola; to defend the colonies thus established and supply them with the means of communication with Spain; to continue the work of exploration and enable the Admiral to open the coveted relations with the dominions of the Grand Khan; to furnish vessels for the immediate transportation to Spain of the store of gold, drugs, and other valuable products accumulated by the garrison which Columbus had left, for this purpose, at Navidad in King Guacanagari's territory; and, finally, to determine the all-important question as to whether Cuba was in truth an island or a part of the Asiatic continent.

While at Seville Columbus had set on foot the preliminaries of this new undertaking, and the King and Queen now associated with him in the manifold preparations Don Juan de Fonseca, archdeacon of that See. The choice of Seville as a base of operations was a wise one, both because of its convenient situation on the Guadalquivir and its long established maritime commerce. The selection of Fonseca — a crafty worldling in churchly garb — proved fatal to the personal hopes and ambitions of his colleague. In all that related to this second voyage, however, Ferdinand and Isabella deferred to Columbus to a degree little less than amazing. It is no exaggeration to say — for scores of documents prove it — that his wish was absolute law. Those who disputed or opposed it were promptly called to account by sharp personal letters from the King and Queen. In no instance, at this period, do we find the Churchman supported as against the Admiral. On the contrary, he was often made by the sovereigns, in no gentle terms, to yield to his colleague's preferences. Later on, he had his revenge.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "This Don Juan de Fonseca," says Las Casas, who knew him thoroughly, "although a priest and an archdeacon, and, after the sovereigns

Columbus and Fonseca were instructed by their sovereigns primarily "to prepare a fleet to go to the Indies, both to conquer and to take possession of the islands and mainland<sup>1</sup> already seized in our name, as well as to seek out others." To this end they were directed to visit "Seville, Cadiz, and whatever other cities, towns, places, and ports in Andalusia they might think convenient," and there charter or buy any and all vessels, of whatever class, which Columbus should select as desirable for his purpose. The authorities all along that seaboard were, by name, required to assist them in obtaining such vessels and in manning and equipping them. Columbus himself was charged to take only the best craft obtainable, and to pick his pilots and crews from among those "who best knew their profession and were most trustworthy."

Scarcely had these first orders been issued when definite news was received that the apprehended interference of Portugal was about to take shape. From his seaport of Santa Maria in Andalusia, the Duke of Medina Sidonia, one of the most powerful of the Spanish grandees, wrote to the King and Queen, warning them that King John was actually preparing a fleet to send out into "those parts of the Ocean Sea which have just been discovered by the Admiral Don Christopher Columbus," and placing his immense influence and resources at the service of their Majesties to thwart the efforts of their rival. Ferdinand and Isabella hastened to thank the Duke, their "dear cousin," calling upon him to make ready all the caravels of his district to be used in case of emergency, and instantly redoubled their efforts to dispatch Columbus and his fleet. The royal secretaries were overtaken with the multitude of decrees,

had given him charge of the Indies, bishop of Badajoz and Palencia, and finally of Burgos, where he died, was very capable in worldly affairs, particularly in recruiting military men for naval armaments, — which was rather a business for Basques than for bishops. For this reason, as long as they lived, their Majesties always entrusted him with the preparation of the expeditions they sent to sea."

<sup>1</sup> This "mainland" was Cuba; Columbus, after no little hesitation, having leaned at last to the belief that no island could be so vast as he then believed Cuba to be.

letters, and rescripts which flowed from the almost frantic zeal of their sovereigns. The treasurers of the various royal funds, the authorities of cities and provinces, the comptrollers of the finances, officials military, ecclesiastical, and civil, diplomats and merchants, — all in turn were assailed with orders, entreaties, or remonstrances, as the case demanded. The archives of the period teem with documents testifying to the extreme activity which suddenly permeated every branch of government, and to the thoroughness with which the Crown sought to provide for the safe execution of its plans in face of the danger confronting them.

An immense store of provisions and wine was accumulated at Seville, sufficient to last throughout the voyage and to maintain the proposed colonies in Hispaniola pending the arrival of later shipments. Great quantities of trinkets for barter with the natives were purchased, — beads, bells, scissors, glass, needles, strap-iron, and such like. Seeds and plants for the use of the colonists; cattle, horses, and fowls for breeding; building materials, ship-stores, artisans' and armorers' tools and supplies, miners' implements, and clothing, — everything, in short, likely to be needed for establishing and maintaining a considerable settlement in a savage country was provided in abundance. To aid in supporting the colony a party of skilled field laborers was to be taken along, selected from those who were familiar with the work of breaking and tilling new lands, and to them was added a man expert in the construction of the irrigating ditches so important to Spanish agriculture. No doubt crossed the mind of King, Admiral, or officials that ere long the colonies would be in touch with the overflowing marts of Cathay and Cipango; but, until such direct communication were opened, it was known that the Spanish settlers and explorers would be dependent upon the home country for the satisfaction of their needs.

For their protection and defence an equal care was shown. The magazines of Malaga were drawn on for fifty sets of armor, together with as many arquebuses and cross-bows. The chief of artillery at Seville was ordered to furnish all the lombards needed, with their supply of powder and stone

shot. The famous Hermandad, or Holy Brotherhood, which had been organized to act as a mounted police in the troublous times of the Moorish wars, was required to supply twenty men-at-arms, with their mounts, picked from the veteran scouts and guerillas of the Granadan frontiers and practised in the border tactics of the wily Moors. The duty of this corps in the Indies, it was stated, should be "to search the country; beause they, in a short time, will know how to do this better than any others." Only those who should offer to go "with a good will" were to be accepted; but, to make assurance doubly sure, Villalva, the Inspector of the Brotherhood, was ordered to conduct his troopers to Seville and not leave them until they were safely on board the ships.

The number of men of all kinds — volunteers, colonists, and officials — allowed to sail was originally fixed at one thousand. The difficulty was not to find these, but rather to choose from the multitude which offered, and the pressure finally became so great that the number was increased to twelve hundred. All of these were entitled to draw rations from the government stores and to receive a stipend, varying with their rank. It soon became apparent that the cost of the enterprise would be enormous; but for once the frugal caution of Ferdinand and his consort was laid aside, in consideration of the brilliant prospect of immediate aggrandizement. The royal treasury was at its lowest ebb, and resort was had to various shifts for the indispensable ways and means. The Holy Brotherhood was asked to find 15,000 ducats, or nearly 6,000,000 maravedies, towards meeting the expense. The special tax of the *tercia*, levied originally for the conquest of Granada, was continued or revived to provide another part. Still a third source of funds was the confiscated wealth of the recently expelled Jews. Candor compels the admission that most of the money embarked in this armada for the acquisition and settlement of the future America was stained with the grime of extortion; but little of that in circulation at the time was free from a like imputation. Whatever their origin, the millions of maravedies expended on the expe-

dition were hardly raised and their disbursement was correspondingly scrutinized. The precautions taken by the Crown to ensure a legitimate distribution of its supplies of cash speak well for the business methods of the government, or ill for the honesty of its servants, as we may choose to interpret them. In the instructions issued to Columbus and Fonseca great stress was laid upon the necessity of registering before notaries public all contracts and engagements entered into, and Juan de Soria, of their Majesties' household, was named to have the supervision of all outlays. Francisco Pinelo, one of the royal treasurers, was directed to keep a minute account of the expenses, and a detail of accountants was made to go out to Hispaniola to establish there a similarly rigid system of book-keeping. Ferdinand and Isabella had already issued a decree forbidding any one to make a voyage to the new-found Indies without their express sanction, and they now proclaimed that all traffic with those lands was a monopoly of the Crown, and that no one sailing on this fleet was to carry with him any article of barter whatever. To ensure compliance with this order, Soria was required to put under oath every soul who should embark, and register each and every article they possessed. In the event of their attempting to evade the law on reaching Hispaniola, their property was to be confiscated.

All of these measures, and many others relating to details, were planned and authorized during the month of May, while Columbus was still with the Court at Barcelona. Ferdinand and Isabella hoped to have everything in readiness so that the fleet might sail by the 15th of July, and they consequently desired that Columbus should be enabled to leave the Court at the earliest date practicable and to give his personal attention to the execution of the elaborate preparations. As soon, therefore, as the royal orders and decrees relating to the equipment of the fleet had all been issued, the King and Queen proceeded to fulfil their promises of reward and honor to the man who had brought them these boundless possessions. A resplendent coat-of-arms was bestowed upon the Admiral, whereon the castles

and lions of the royal escutcheon were quartered with three anchors and seven islands, indicative of the profession and discoveries of the new grandee. One thousand ducats were paid him as a largess, besides the pension awarded him for first having espied the land, or, to be more exact, the light thereon. Of greater moment was the solemn confirmation to him and his heirs of the titles and prerogatives pledged to him, under the agreement of April 30th, 1492, in the event of his discovering the "islands and mainland" beyond the Ocean Sea. He had performed his part of the contract, and had petitioned the sovereigns to comply with theirs. This Ferdinand and Isabella accordingly proceeded to do, — so far, at least, as the handsome engrossing of parchments went. Perhaps they really intended, at that time, to keep their engagements with the Admiral. He certainly was justified in thinking so when he read the text of their solemn ratification of their pledges of the year before. The document was dated on the 28th of May, and began with this comprehensive invocation: "In the name of the Holy Trinity and Eternal Unity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; and of the Blessed Virgin the Glorious St. Mary, Our Lady; and of the Blessed Apostle St. James, Light and Mirror of All Spain, Patron and Guide of the Sovereigns of Castile and Leon; and of all the other Saints, Male and Female, in the Courts of Heaven." Having summoned this cloud of witnesses to attest their sincerity and earnestness, the King and Queen, "considering the risk and danger in which, for our benefit, you [Columbus] placed yourself in going to search for and to discover these islands, and also that in which you are now placing yourself in going to seek other islands and the mainland," confirmed to Columbus and to his "sons, descendants, and successors, one after the other and for all future time, the stipulated offices of Admiral of the Ocean Sea and Viceroy and Governor of the islands and mainland which you have discovered, and of the other islands and mainland which by you, or through your labors, shall be hereafter discovered in the direction of the Indies." These were far from empty honors, for the same instrument guaranteed to



Columbus and his heirs, for ever and ever, "all the prerogatives, distinctions, rights, and salaries" enjoyed by the Admirals of Castile and Leon, and, within the unmarked limits of his new vice-kingdom, absolute jurisdiction *without appeal* in all causes, civil as well as criminal, with power to issue writs and decrees in the name of the King and Queen, and to use the royal seal.

Well might Columbus feel secure when the rubrics of his sovereigns were attached to this weighty instrument, and jealously might he guard it throughout his life; for he, at least, had some approximate realization of the vast power and profit which it involved. Considered in its purely commercial aspect, it assured to him one-tenth of all the products of the lands discovered either directly by him or through his instrumentality, besides the right of trading on his personal account to the extent of one-eighth of the entire future commerce between Spain and whatever dominions should become hers in the New World. Just what these dominions might be, or what the import of their possible traffic with Spain, was of course problematical; but it is idle to claim that Ferdinand and Isabella, two of the most astute — not to say of the craftiest — monarchs in Christendom, did not realize what they were doing when they conferred these broad powers and great privileges upon their Admiral. They, as well as he, believed that he had reached the eastern confines of Asia on his first voyage; they, as well as he, knew that this second fleet now preparing was destined for the establishment of a permanent trade with the realms of the Grand Khan and the kings of the Orient, if not for their conquest, — with those very provinces and islands whose fabulous wealth had excited the cupidity of Spanish and Portuguese alike for nearly a century past. The bargain was, if anything, unduly favorable to the Crown. "Win for us a short road to that dazzling East, wherever it may be," the monarchs had, in effect, said to the Genoese sailor, "and we will do thus and so for you." They shared with him the belief that the East had been reached, and in reserving for themselves seven-eighths of the commerce with what they thought was the Asiatic



continent and the Celebes, and nine-tenths of the revenue from those regions, they were, the impartial observer would think, amply providing for their own compensation.

In addition to this confirmation of his rank and privileges, Columbus also received at this time from their Majesties his commission as Captain-General of the fleet which was fitting out, a letter of instructions for the conduct of the enterprise, and several decrees relating to details for the administration of the proposed colonies. We shall look in vain through the annals of far more arbitrary governments than was that of Ferdinand and Isabella without finding wider powers granted to favorite minister or successful courtier than those now bestowed upon this untied Viceroy. A scant year before he was a penniless pensioner of the rulers who now transferred to him the most jealously guarded prerogatives of royalty. Not content with conferring upon him the unrestrained power to dispose, without exception, of the lives and property of their future subjects beyond the sea, the Spanish monarchs voluntarily surrendered the right of veto which, in the original contract, they had reserved over all the appointments made by Columbus, and now granted him authority to make such directly. Moreover, they empowered him, "in the event of it proving desirable for him to go in search of other islands and the mainland" after the colony was established in Hispaniola, to appoint a deputy or lieutenant armed with all his authority, even to the use of the royal seal entrusted to the Viceroy himself. In short, beyond the Ocean Sea, Columbus was to stand for the Crown, untrammelled, absolute, and irresponsible.

There seems to be no doubt that Ferdinand and Isabella realized that the conditions of a government established over the unknown races of a remote and isolated territory, where all was as yet pure matter of conjecture, differed so essentially from those of a European province or principality that true policy demanded a rigid abstention from all interference by the Crown. Had they pursued this conviction with fidelity, the subsequent history of their Admiral and his vice-kingdom would have been far different; but

even at this early date, when their confidence in him knew no bounds, and when each day bore witness to their desire to sustain him in every action, the force of habit imperiously asserted itself, and some order or nomination would issue to controvert the wise system so laboriously established on scores of parchments. Many of the royal dependants were appointed as inspectors, comptrollers, notaries, supercargoes, and to similar offices of trust and responsibility. Thus, one Alonso de Acosta was sent out as captain of a ship, with the position of *alguazil*, or justice, assured him upon reaching the Indies. Bernal de Pisa was to be chief lieutenant to the comptrollers of accounts in Hispaniola, and was furnished by the King and Queen with detailed instructions as to his proceedings when there. Diego Marquez was to go as Inspector for the Crown. Sebastian de Olano was sent to Columbus as their Majesties' choice for the Receiver-General of the Indies, and the Admiral was asked to take good care of him and the officers who accompanied him. Juan de Aguado was to go with the fleet, at her Majesty's express desire, in any capacity which should offer. "I wish to have him well treated," wrote Isabella to Columbus, "as he is my servant and has been of much use to me. *Give him some good office* in the expedition, where he may advance my interests and receive some benefit as well." All of these were Court officials,—gentlemen in waiting, chamberlains, ushers, and the like,—but the appointments were not confined to the positions of less degree. Francisco de Peñalosa and Alonso de Vallejo, captains of the royal guards, were sent to command some of the anticipated military operations; Dr. Chanca, one of the Queen's own physicians, was selected as surgeon-in-chief to the Admiral; and last, but chief of all, Fray Boil, a Benedictine monk, and eleven fellow clerics, were chosen to go with the fleet in order to gather the hordes of Asia into the fold of the Church. Surely herein lay all the elements needed for conspiracy and rebellion, should any plotter ever attempt to sow discord between the officials who held their appointments direct from the Crown and those who owed their advancement to the brand-new Vice-

roy. All that was needed was distance and discontent, and Time might safely be trusted to furnish these. It is true that not all of the nominees of the King and Queen were obnoxious to Columbus, and that when he objected his complaint was heeded. That Rodrigo Sanchez, of Segovia, whom we have seen keeping watch with Columbus on the fateful night in October the year before, when the moon shone on the sands of Guanahaní, had been proposed by their Majesties to accompany the Admiral on this second voyage as an officer of the Crown. Columbus represented that for certain causes he was not on good terms with Sanchez, and immediately orders were issued that the latter was not to be permitted to go upon any consideration, even should it be necessary to reimburse him for the outlays already made in anticipation of the voyage.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the royal mandate ran, "We do not wish that any one with whom the Admiral has any grievance should go." Doubtless the King and Queen were as ready to withdraw any of their presentations as this one; but it was not in the Admiral's power to scrutinize them all, even had he been willing to oppose the repeated expressions of his sovereigns' preference, and thus were sown the seeds of dissension and disaster.

The letter of instructions delivered to Columbus on the eve of his departure from the Court was a singular compound of pious bigotry and worldly prudence. When we recall the fact that it was intended to provide for the subjugation and administration of the empires of Eastern Asia, we cannot but admire the colossal confidence of the Spanish monarchs both in themselves and their Viceroy. The first care was, ostensibly, for the natives of the countries it was proposed to colonize. These, it was declared, were to

<sup>1</sup> This Rodrigo Sanchez was the royal inspector on the first voyage, and one of the two persons to whom Columbus appealed when he saw the light early on the night on which Guanahaní was seen. The King and Queen had his report before them when they adjudged the reward to Columbus for having observed the light four hours before Juan Bermejo saw the moonlit sands. In view of the persistent effort which has been made to show that Columbus defrauded this "poor sailor," the fact that the Inspector, though not the Admiral's friend, did not dispute the justice of his claim, is not without significance.

be converted by the labors of Father Boil and his associates, assisted by some of the Indians who had returned with Columbus from the first voyage and were now somewhat instructed both in the religion of Rome and the language of Castile. "All who sail in the armada," their Majesties insisted, "and all who shall go from here in the future, are to treat the said Indians very well and tenderly, without giving them any offence whatever, endeavoring to establish close companionship and acquaintance with them and doing them the best offices possible. And the said Admiral shall freely give them various presents from the articles of merchandise belonging to the Crown, which are taken along for purposes of traffic, and shall do them much honor. And if any one shall ill-treat the said Indians, the Admiral, as Viceroy and Governor, shall severely chastise the offender, in virtue of the powers vested in him." Ecclesiastics and laymen alike were to endeavor to convert them, or, rather, since the Admiral had reported that they had no religion at all, to instil into their minds the principles of Christianity.

"And because spiritual affairs cannot endure for long without temporal ones," sagaciously proceeded this document, sundry regulations were laid down for the Admiral's guidance in the government of his viceregal charge. These relate to the prevention of all traffic except for account of the Crown; to the keeping exact accounts for all arms, provisions, munitions, and merchandise; to the establishing a judiciary and police; to the forms to be employed in decrees and official acts; to the institution of a custom-house and the collection of the revenue, and to other details of the kind. Two measures embraced in these instructions are worthy of note. The first implied that some apprehension already existed of future insubordination on the part of the ill-disposed, once the restraining influences of the home government were left behind; for explicit orders were given that if the Admiral, after reaching Hispaniola, should send any ships upon voyages of discovery or trade, their captains and crews were to obey him implicitly, upon pain of such punishment as he should choose to administer upon their persons or goods. The other defined distinctly the

portion to be received by Columbus in the profits of the Indies. "The Admiral is to receive the one-eighth part," recites the letter, "of everything that may be obtained in gold and other products in the islands and mainland, he to pay one-eighth of the cost of the merchandise employed in such commerce; first deducting the one-tenth part of the profit which the Admiral is to receive in the manner established by the contract which their Majesties caused to be executed with the said Admiral." It is difficult to see how any contention could arise as to the meaning of this oft-repeated engagement, or why it should have been reiterated, in season and out of season, if their Majesties intended to ignore it at the first convenient opportunity.

The delivery of these instructions completed the preliminary arrangements, so far as they could be ordered from a distance. With a mind at ease concerning the dispositions already made for the success of his approaching voyage, with a complete understanding established between his sovereigns and himself regarding the conduct of affairs in the Indies, and with their solemn guarantee of the honors and rewards which were his due in virtue of the faithful performance of his gigantic undertaking, Columbus took leave of the King and Queen and set out for Seville, accompanied beyond the gates of Barcelona by the whole ceremonious Court.





## II.

### FOUNDING THE GREAT MONOPOLY.

THE second day after leaving Barcelona Columbus heard that the King of Portugal had despatched certain caravels from Lisbon, presumably with the intention of seeking the Indies discovered by the Spanish ships the year before. These tidings he at once transmitted to Ferdinand and Isabella, and received as promptly a reply by courier saying that the news "agrees with what we know here," and asking to be advised in good season of whatever else he might learn. The rumor served to quicken the anxiety of the King and Queen that their fleet should set sail before King John's captains succeeded in finding their way across the Western Ocean. Shortly after Columbus had arrived at Court in April and reported his conversation with the King of Portugal, Ferdinand and Isabella had sent an ambassador to demand from their royal brother a declaration of his intentions with regard to the discoveries made by their Admiral. This emissary returned to Barcelona a few days after Columbus had started from Seville, bringing assurances from King John that his only desire was that "each Crown should hold what belongs to it"; but the ambiguous reply only increased the suspicions of Ferdinand, and he sent another messenger after Columbus, urging him to make haste to sail at an early date. "If you can start the sooner," continued the letter, "by leaving some of the ships behind for the present and taking fewer people with you than was first proposed, do as you think best; but if you have cause to doubt the sincerity of the King of Portugal,



be sure and take them all." This new doubt which had arisen called for extreme precautions,—the possibility of a collision occurring, either in the Indies or on the way thither, between the force commanded by Columbus and that believed to be sent out by King John. At any cost Spain was determined to retain the fruits of her Admiral's boldness and sagacity, and the correspondence between the sovereigns and Columbus began to assume a distinctly warlike tone.

The weeks, however, passed without further alarms. Columbus reached Seville, visited the neighboring seaports to choose his ships and their crews, and infused into all of the preparations something of his wonted energy and enthusiasm. Still the day set for his departure, the 15th of July, arrived and there was no prospect of the fleet getting away. Ferdinand and Isabella wrote to Fonseca, urging him to hasten its sailing by all practicable means. If, they wrote, the delay was due to the Admiral's desire to assemble an armament capable of holding its own with the Portuguese in case of an encounter, let him sail at once with what he had ready, and Fonseca could remain in Seville and prepare another fleet to send after the Admiral to reënforce him. Columbus leaned strongly towards some such plan as that attributed to him by the sovereigns. From Cordova, where he had gone to visit his family and inspect the supplies gathered at that depot for the expedition, he had written to the King and Queen suggesting that King John was holding back the Portuguese squadron in order to let the Spaniards sail first, intending to follow them and come to an engagement whenever occasion might serve. To provide for such a contingency, the Admiral proposed that more strength be given to the military side of this expedition. He asked their Majesties that the magazines of Granada and Malaga might be drawn upon for a larger equipment of artillery, armor, and ammunition than had been provided, and that competent leaders might be ordered to accompany him. In especial he repeated a suggestion already made at Barcelona, that Melchor Maldonado, who had, some five years before, suc-

cessfully directed the expedition sent by Spain to the assistance of her ally, the King of Naples, should go to the Indies in command of the troops. He also urged another measure which had been broached at Court, namely, that the formidable squadron known as the "Galician," from the province where it had been organized, should be detached from its coast duty and ordered to make part of his fleet. This squadron consisted of five warships, — the largest of them having a burthen of 1200 tons, — was commanded by Iñigo de Artieta, a notable captain of the time, and was manned by 900 sturdy Basques who, like all true Celts, took a greater delight in fighting than in peace. The vessels were too deep and the crews too turbulent to be of use in colonizing or exploring the regions overseas, but if blows were to be struck, Iñigo and his swarthy Biscayans were likely to prove an invincible escort. To most of these suggestions Ferdinand and Isabella replied with a ready affirmative; but they repeated insistently their recommendation that Columbus hasten his departure at all costs. They assured him that Fonseca had orders to ascertain the preparations making by King John, and to arm and send after Columbus, in case of necessity, a fleet to support him which should be at least twice as large as any of the Portuguese should equip. Nevertheless, they ordered Melchor Maldonado to join the Admiral at Seville, despite the valiant warrior's plea that serious impediments prevented his making the voyage. "We should gladly excuse you," wrote his amiable sovereigns, "but your going will greatly serve us, since you are who you are; therefore do we command you to go to the islands with Don Christopher Columbus." Orders were likewise despatched to the Galician fleet, which was lying in the port of Bermeo on the Bay of Biscay, to sail around the coasts of the Peninsula and report to the Admiral at Cadiz. The proposed draft of arms from Granada and Malaga was not approved, however, as their transportation to Seville would delay too long the sailing of the expedition, which was supposed by their Majesties to be almost ready.

The month of July closed with every nerve strained by



the Spanish officials to anticipate the schemes of Portugal. They were making rapid progress towards this end when a fresh cause of disquiet manifested itself in the excessive cost of the preparations. Concerning this a dispute arose between Juan de Soria, the comptroller, and Columbus. Ferdinand and Isabella learned of it early in August, through Fray Boil, the Benedictine monk, who began thus early to meddle in what concerned neither him nor his Church. They at once wrote to Fonseca, commenting forcibly upon the incident and insisting that "the Admiral be honored and obeyed by all, according to the rank which we have given him," and that Soria was to be told as much "on their Majesties' behalf." They also wrote a soothing letter to Columbus, which Fonseca was to deliver, "and say to him for us," the sovereigns added, "everything that seems desirable, so that he may be satisfied and consoled for the acts of those at Seville, and may hasten his departure." To Soria himself they sent a stinging note, saying "we have heard of certain strange things you have done at Seville; that you do not regard and respect the Admiral of the Indies as is right and as we desire"; ordering him to obey the Admiral in all things thereafter, and declaring that for the contrary procedure they "will order punishment to be administered." Still, whatever may have been their comptroller's shortcomings in matters of tact, he was justified in his uneasiness at the rapid increase in the cost of the expedition. The sum originally provided had already been exhausted: it may have been enough for the projects of colonization and continued discovery, but it could not bear the enormous increase involved in the extensive preparations for a possible conflict with Portugal.<sup>1</sup> The fleet was not yet ready to sail, no limit could be fixed to the outlay, and Ferdinand and Isabella were straitened for means with which to carry out their various projects. They had entered into an engagement with Boabdil, the unfortunate ex-king of Granada, that he and

<sup>1</sup> Nearly 6,000,000 maravedies were allotted to the Galician squadron alone, — six times the total amount granted Columbus for the squadron of discovery in the preceding year!

all his following of Moorish nobles and courtiers should be transported to Morocco during that summer, and for this purpose had set aside a million maravedies; but now they wrote Pinelo, their treasurer at Seville, asking him to advance this money to Columbus instead. "As you see," they said, "the winter is coming and it is desirable that the fleet should sail at once. . . . If any money be wanting, do you provide it, even if for this you take the million which you are to give us for the Moorish King."

From this time forward scarcely a letter was written by Ferdinand and Isabella which did not urge economy in every detail. To Columbus they wrote, on August 4th, in reply to a suggestion from him that more ships would be needed, on account of the room required by the horses: "If the horses cannot go in the Galician ships, see whether you cannot dispense with other things which are not so necessary, because of some scarcity of money which exists." In the same missive they approve his plan of placing a notary and accountant on each vessel, so that the records should be kept separately; "but," they added, "neither one officer nor the other is to receive greater pay than the other persons who are on board." "For our sakes," they again urge, "endeavor by all means in your power, in spending money, to avoid every unnecessary outlay, for there is some want of it, and we do not wish to have you delayed an hour by this." The same anxiety was shown in the royal letters to Fonseca. Referring to the chartering of additional ships for the horses, Fonseca is instructed to avoid it if possible, "because if this were done the expense would increase and the money give out; for, as you know, all that was planned for this fleet has not turned out as was expected." A fortnight later they wrote to the same official to act as he thought best in certain matters, "so long as the outlay of money is not augmented, lest that should be wanting." The Admiral was to have the extra ships he had asked for, after all, "provided they do not add to the cost." It is apparent that there was a constant difference of opinion between Columbus and the treasury officials as to what were needful expenditures, for in the middle of

August he again came in conflict with Juan de Soria upon this subject. That officer, notwithstanding the royal rebuke of two weeks before, refused to approve certain payments contracted by the Admiral, and the latter appealed to the King and Queen. The answer came in no uncertain tones. "You already know," the monarchs wrote to Fonseca, "that we charged you when you were here that the Admiral of the Indies should receive every satisfaction, both in the business itself and in the manner of conducting it; and, since the fleet is going under his command, it is right that everything should be done to his liking, without any one raising questions or disputes; therefore do you look closely to this for our service and do all you can to please him. Tell Juan de Soria for us that we command him to act in harmony with the Admiral and offer him no contradiction, and if he should make any objection to approving that which you and the Admiral sign, let the money be paid without Soria's signature, for we want the Admiral's wishes to be followed in all things." To Soria himself they were even more peremptory. He had presented his side of the case to the King and Queen, but had met with scant sympathy. "We have your letter," they answered, "and have suffered much vexation from what we learned you did and are doing in the transactions with the Admiral of the Indies, because you know very well you should always act with him; and, since this affair is entrusted chiefly to him and Don Juan de Fonseca, you are not to oppose what they do, and thus we command you." Having harangued him for his obstinacy, his royal master and mistress, with truly kinglike inconsistency, proceeded to enjoin him to do the very thing for which they had been chiding him. "Do as the Admiral desires," they concluded, "provided that the cost is not increased so that the money runs short." But the intervention of Ferdinand and Isabella did not put a stop to the sorry wrangle, the consequences of which were bitterly felt by Columbus in after years. There is no evidence that it had other ground than an honest divergence of judgment between two officers, each tenacious of the prerogatives of

his charge. The Admiral proposed that his fleet should be so constituted and equipped that it should be equal to any emergency on either side of the Ocean Sea; the Comptroller strove to husband every possible ducat, keenly aware of the emptiness of the royal coffers. Columbus invoked the authority of the King and Queen; Soria retorted by refusing his sanction to the engagement of the Admiral's personal attendants. Despite the repeated intimation of the royal displeasure, Fonseca sided with Soria; and thus began the feud that led, not indirectly, to a large part of the ignominy and distress visited in later years upon the Viceroy of the Indies.

The state of the finances was not the only source of anxiety to Ferdinand and Isabella. When the Admiral's squadron failed to get away in July, he had fixed the 15th of August as the probable date of sailing. As this date approached, he was compelled to advise his sovereigns that the fleet was not even yet ready for sea. The tidings were most unwelcome to the King and Queen, but they showed no sign of impatience in their intercourse with him. "As to your departure," they wrote on August 18th, "we would that it had not been delayed, but that you had sailed on the 15th of this month, as you wrote us you should do. . . . Give much haste to your departure, for a single day of delay now means more than twenty days heretofore, as the winter is near." The advent of the stormy season usually put an end to navigation along the Atlantic coasts of Europe until the more favorable spring weather opened, and no one yet knew what the winter might mean out yonder on the Western Ocean. The solicitude on this score was, no doubt, genuine; but it was secondary to the ever-present disquiet concerning the plans of Portugal. News had again reached Columbus at Seville, that King John had despatched a single caravel from Madeira into the West. In communicating this report to Ferdinand and Isabella the Admiral had proposed sending after the Portuguese some of his own vessels which were already equipped and waiting at Cadiz. The

sovereigns acquiesced in the suggestion, adding only a warning that the Spanish ships must not carry the pursuit into the African waters claimed by Portugal. They added a renewed assurance which was meant to relieve the mind of Columbus from all apprehension on account of the squadron which King John was said to be preparing to send in the wake of the Admiral's fleet: "If the King of Portugal should prepare a fleet to send out to where you are going, have no care about it; for all will be provided for, with God's help. Do not delay on this score, but start soon." So great was their desire to conceal the whereabouts of the Indies, that they concluded their letter with a caution against the Admiral laying his outward course too near the European shores on leaving Cadiz. "It seems to us best that you should not approach Cape St. Vincent," they wrote; "rather draw away from that coast, even if you have to make a detour, so that you may not go near Portugal, lest they know the course you take." To Fonseca they wrote in the same strain, earnestly directing him to keep informed of the preparations making by the Portuguese and to be himself prepared for action, "so that if we have to despatch another fleet after the Admiral, it may sail promptly."

The King of Portugal meantime had thought it expedient to send two ambassadors to the Spanish Court to disclaim all intentions of a hostile nature and allay the suspicions which were so vehemently aroused in the minds of Ferdinand and Isabella. The Spanish monarchs seem to have put little faith in these protestations. They rested their claims to a monopoly of transoceanic exploration and navigation upon the recent Papal Bull. East of the line therein laid down—that is, along the coasts of Africa and, if so King John chose, around the lately explored Cape of Good Hope,—the Portuguese might sail at will, until they found a way to the coveted "Spiceries." But west of that line, wherever the restless Ocean Sea led them, the Spaniards alone had the right to go. For the Portuguese to attempt to follow them on that waste of waters was, thanks to Pope Alexander of Borgia, tantamount to an invasion of Castilian territory, and would so be received. Little wonder, consid-

ering the vague ideas of even the wisest as to the relative positions of the Cape, Japan, and Cuba, that the Portuguese emissaries should confess themselves unable to solve the knotty problem of the boundaries to the "Indies," and return to Lisbon for further instructions.

In this emergency Ferdinand and Isabella threw themselves on the geographical skill of their Admiral, and referred their whole case to him for decision, fairly entreating him, meanwhile, to forestall Portugal by getting under way at the earliest moment possible and thus solve the dispute by an accomplished act. "There has been much discussion with the Portuguese ambassadors," they wrote to Columbus on September 5th, "about this affair, and we have no faith that it will be adjusted, because they are not instructed as to what belongs to us. We have decided to inform you of the fact, so that you may know that no agreement has been reached up to the present, and we strictly charge you that for our sakes you do not delay your sailing for a single hour." The Portuguese messengers had declared that the caravel reported by Columbus had slipped away from Madeira without the permission of King John, and that the latter, as soon as the news reached Lisbon, had straightway sent three others to seek and bring it back. "It may be, however," the King and Queen wrote to the Admiral, "that this was done with other designs, and that those who went in the caravels, whether the single one or the three others, are anxious to spy out something of which belongs to us; therefore we command you that you look diligently to this and provide for it in such manner that neither these nor any other caravels which may set out shall discover or reach any part which belongs to us within the boundaries which you wot of. Although we hope that we shall reach a conclusion with the King of Portugal, it is right, and we so desire, that those who ventured into the parts which are ours should be very sufficiently chastised, and that both their persons and their ships be seized."

There is in all this correspondence between Ferdinand and his Admiral — for, although they were signed by both King and Queen, every line proved the letters to have been



the work of the monarch who later showed himself to be the ablest master of statecraft of his times — an appearance of naïveté and disingenuousness which, when we consider the circumstances, approaches the grotesque. It is the work of a consummate dissimulator showing his whole hand to a servant in whose abilities and devotion he has implicit trust, and yet whom he is bent upon cajoling in turn to compass his own royal ends. For, while Ferdinand was inciting Columbus to take this whole vexed question out of the domain of politics by hastening off with his armada and reaching the Indies while the negotiations were pending, Ferdinand himself was trying to find out exactly where these much-talked-of Indies were ! What was the object of Columbus in hiding, first from his pilots and captains and afterwards from the King and Queen, the exact record of his observations while on his first voyage and, consequently, the precise course to be steered to reach Hispaniola and Cuba, we can only conjecture. Presumably he did not wish to disclose these details until the Spanish Crown had fulfilled its obligations to him and he was fairly settled in the enjoyment of his promised dignities. Be this as it may, although he had left with the Queen the Journal of his voyage and shown her Majesty and Ferdinand the chart which he had made of his discoveries, neither the one nor the other indicated in what part of the broad Western Ocean the latter were situated. Therefore, in informing the Admiral of the status of the negotiations with Portugal, the King wrote : —

“In the discussion which has been held with them [the Portuguese], some contend that between the point which they call Good Hope (which is on the route they now follow to reach Guinea and the Gold Coast) and the boundary you said should be inserted in the Pope’s Bull, there are probably islands and even a continent, and that these from their vicinity to the sun must be very valuable, and richer than all the others [discovered]. Since we are sure you know more about this than any one else, we desire you to send us your opinion about it at once, so that, if you agree with those here and think it desirable, the Bull may be corrected. . . . Send us also the degrees in which

lie the islands and continent which you found, so that we may better understand your book. Also send us the chart in much detail, with all the names written down; and if you think we should not show it, write us to that effect."

To Fonseca their Majesties wrote a letter of much the same tenor, referring to Columbus the decision as to what course should be followed, now that no agreement had been reached in the dispute as to metes and bounds. "The more we discuss this affair," they wrote the Archdeacon, "the more do we recognize how great a service he [the Admiral] has done us, and that concerning it he knows more than all other men; and so everything should be referred to him."

Queen Isabella alone, whose regard for Columbus and whose faith in him are open to no suspicion of insincerity, does not seem to have been drawn into the tangled web of intrigue. On the 5th of September, in anticipation of his immediate sailing, she wrote him, returning the Journal of his first voyage which he had left with her to be copied. The letter was addressed, with a pride which is almost pathetic when we recall the bitter loss her death caused Columbus, to "Don Christopher Columbus, *My* Admiral of the Ocean Sea, Viceroy and Governor of the Islands newly found in the Indies." After apologizing for keeping the book so long, on account of the necessity of having it copied in secret by trustworthy hands, to prevent any knowledge of its contents being betrayed to the Portuguese, the Queen says: —

"Of a surety, from all that has been seen and said concerning this undertaking, each day it is discovered to be much vaster and of great scope and import, and that you have greatly served us therein; and we hold you in our special care. Thus we trust in God that you shall receive from us much more honor and benefit and aggrandizement than that which is already stipulated, and which shall be discharged and fulfilled with all scrupulousness, as is right and as your achievements and merits deserve. If the sailing-chart which you were to make is finished, send it to me at once, and for my sake make great haste in your departing, so that may be effected at once, since you see how much the success of the enterprise demands it."



The letter closes with a caution to be constantly on his guard against the King of Portugal, "so that in no event may you be deceived."

By this time the preparations for the voyage were all but completed. Changing conditions had called for corresponding modifications in the arrangements, particularly with regard to the offensive portion of the fleet. The formidable Biscayan squadron had been detached at the last moment from the Admiral's orders, apparently from motives of economy, and restored to the duty of transporting King Boabdil and his retinue to Tangiers. The King and Queen trusted to Fonseca, as we have said, to keep a close watch upon Portugal and have other vessels in readiness to oppose her, should that power attempt to send a fleet after Columbus; hence the acquisition of the heavy armament proposed by the latter was deferred until the emergency should arise. Moreover, Captain Iñigo de Artieta had shown himself to be more of a freebooter than the Admiral cared, perhaps, to be burdened with. In coming around from the Biscayan coast to Cadiz, the doughty Captain had encountered a squadron of Portuguese caravels bound from Lisbon to Guinea, and had then and there gone in chase and, apparently, captured the entire flotilla. For this excess of zeal he was roundly rebuked by the Admiral, who insisted that such action was sure to be disavowed by Ferdinand and Isabella, as indeed was the case; for they wrote a sharp letter to their over-zealous officer, ordering him to restore the vessels at once to Portugal and sending him with his fleet to the seaport of Granada to carry the Moors to Africa, instead of sailing to the Golden Indies with Columbus. The change in orders can hardly have been agreeable to the adventurous Basque, but he had a glimmer of hope left in the instructions given him to return as soon as practicable from Morocco, so that if the Portuguese should go in pursuit of Columbus the Biscayan fleet could follow after and settle scores with their rivals on the high seas.

The prospect of sending out this second detachment in reinforcement of the Admiral led to the postponement until its sailing of many shipments at first designed for the pio-

neer fleet, — a measure which still further husbanded both money and time at a juncture when both were of imminent importance. Columbus was directed to “leave his opinion as to the fleet which will have to be prepared, if it should be needful to send one out, and the persons who should go in it, and settle upon some of the ships he thought should go”; and he was accordingly enabled to dispense with much he would otherwise have taken at this time. With these provisions made for future supplies and aid, he could set sail in perfect confidence.

By the middle of September all the vessels were in readiness to sail, the stores and munitions on board, and the crews awaiting their orders. Prior to embarking the twelve hundred men who were to make the voyage, Columbus held a review of them, with their arms and equipments, at Seville. The result was disquieting. It had been consistently his aim to have his whole force, military as well as civil, selected with a view to the welfare of the colonies to be founded and the rapid success of his other operations. He had proposed that, as to the more humble class of followers, the men should be industrious and hardy, and, as to the better sort, loyal and capable of endurance under the trials he knew to be inevitable. What he could do to maintain such a standard had been done; but the influences of the Court were strong and his opportunities for revision few, so that little by little the lists were filled with soldiers of fortune, ambitious adventurers, and the more worthless dependants of king and grandees, until the motley throng assembled at Seville wore rather the aspect of a freebooting foray than of a sober colonizing expedition. This was not what their commander had planned and hoped for, but he had no remedy at that late hour. The men as they stood had passed the royal inspectors and were enrolled on the comptroller’s books. The sentiments of the Admiral, and the course he pursued, before finally sending his ill-assorted company on the vessels assigned to them, are best learned from a report he made, upon a later occasion, to the King and Queen: —

"When I came out here" [to Hispaniola], he wrote, "I brought with me many people for the subjection of these lands, all of whom I accepted by reason of the importunities exercised, who declared that they would serve faithfully in the cause, and better than any others. But the contrary was the case, as you have seen; for they did not join except in the belief that the gold which it was said they should find, and the spices, were to be gathered with a shovel; that the drugs lay ready in bundles, and everything was close to the edge of the sea, so that nothing remained to be done but throw it into the ships. So blinded were they by avarice; nor did they consider that, although there were gold, it would be in mines, and so with the other metals, and the spices would be on the trees; so that it would be necessary to dig out the gold and gather and dry the spices. All this I told them in Seville; for there were so many who wished to come, and I was so well aware of their motive, that I caused this to be explained to them, as well as all the hardships which those who go to people new and distant lands are wont to suffer. To this they all replied that they came with this expectation and to win glory by so doing; but it all turned out to be the contrary."

What the consequences were we shall see in due time. Meantime every soul of the number, from the royal inspector to the youngest cabin-boy, was sworn on mass-book and crucifix to be a loyal subject of the King and Queen and serve faithfully their Admiral and Viceroy, upon pain of death in this world and an indefinite sojourn in Purgatory in the next. This done, they were ordered to seek their ships. Now began, however, one of those successful speculations which proves the whole world akin. Many of the men who had made a brave show of armor, arquebuse, and cross-bow at the Admiral's review hurriedly sold their equipments to the nearest dealer and went on board as unarmed as the ship's scullion. Others sold outright their place on the roll to those who were anxious to go but had failed of appointment. The twenty horses whose transportation had caused Columbus so much concern, and which had received his approval, were spirited out of the way and as many worthless hacks were smuggled into the ships in their stead. Other like scurvy tricks were played in the excitement of these last days, until the effectiveness

of the enlisted force was seriously impaired and its number swelled by the surreptitious entrance of two or three hundred stowaways, who managed to hide themselves aboard the several crafts. It is doubtful whether any of this disorder would have been possible had the Admiral been able to continue his personal oversight of the embarkation, but he had been seized with a severe attack of the gouty affection with which he suffered and was confined to his bed. Later on, when he became aware of the rascalities perpetrated, he did not hesitate to lay them at the door of Juan de Soria, the royal comptroller, charging that official with having turned a pretty penny thereby, in addition to the embarrassment sure to result to his enemy, the Admiral, from the disorganization introduced into his carefully laid plans. The King and Queen thought the matter serious enough to warrant an investigation, and there the affair rested, after the manner of investigations. Such untoward things have since happened, even in the new world which Columbus was setting forth to explore.

The force embarked; the squadron was directed to rendezvous at Cadiz, and there await the coming of the Admiral. It was an evil chance that he was stricken with illness just then, but it was not extraordinary. The excessive strain, mental as well as physical, under which he labored so long without remission had broken a constitution which, if we may judge from occasional references in his writings, was already enfeebled by a life of hardship. If the six months just closing had been a season of triumph, they had also imposed a fresh burden of anxiety and toil upon one who was entitled, if ever man was, to some respite, however brief. That Columbus had taken none, but, from the hour of his return from his first voyage to that of departing upon his second, had been content to immerse himself in the myriad details of such an undertaking as that he was now embarking upon, should weigh somewhat against the protestations of those who affect to see in him only an audacious speculator or greedy adventurer. Until these later days men have not grudged a generous applause and lasting fame to those who pursue

•

great aims with patient diligence, who shun no labor to compass worthy ends, who postpone the enjoyment of ease, profit, and glory itself, to achieve a great ideal. Now, forsooth, such appreciation is unseemly — worthy only of an “amiable hero-worship.” That Historical Criticism which is only too often neither historical as to facts nor critical in its treatment of them prefers to hunt out and magnify the weaknesses of a great character rather than to accept and respect its manly side. To this school the energy, foresight, and persistence shown by Columbus at this season are no more than the consuming greed of an inflated vanity hastening to enter upon its new office and to derive therefrom the promised advantages of wealth and rank. But those who are contented to regard him as only a “mere mortal man,” with his *quantum* of human defects hidden by his *sufficit* of human greatness, will not fail to conceive a juster estimate of his personality. For it is most certain that in all these months of stress and care Columbus had proved himself to be a man of infinite resource, of unlimited capacity for labor of many kinds, and of unfaltering persistence. He had planned with Ferdinand and Isabella a far-reaching scheme of exploration, occupation, and development extending over a quarter of the globe’s superficies; he had attended personally to the selection of the ships and, so far as he was permitted, of the men destined to carry out these plans; had drawn up the schedules for the equipment, armament, and provisioning of his fleet, and of the colonies to be established and maintained until they should be self-supporting; had kept a keen watch on Portugal’s underhand manœuvres and acted promptly to thwart them; had proposed to his sovereigns first the scheme of the Papal Bull and afterwards a modification of it which, if granted, would vastly enhance their authority in the undiscovered parts of ocean; and, not least, had upheld his dignity and prerogatives in the face of the influential and numerous cabal which was bent on breaking the pride or foiling the success of the man they could only recognize as a lucky parvenu. It may be urged that in all this he had the countenance of the King and

Queen at a time when that was as much to ambitious men as are the sun's rays to struggling vegetation; but no small skill was required to win and hold this. To the courtly and liberal chronicler of the Spanish monarchs, Peter Martyr, the Admiral was merely "a certain Genoese, one Christopher Columbus," even after Ferdinand and Isabella had bestowed their unstinted approbation upon him and hailed him as a grandee of Spain. What the historian wrote without malice, from a mere habit which connected greatness instinctively with birth and rank, was covertly repeated and magnified by scores of influential dependants upon the royal favor, whose envy blinded them to everything but a comparison between the new Admiral's eminence and their own relative insignificance. To command the continued confidence of Ferdinand and Isabella, in the face of so much malign sentiment and suggestion, of itself betokens the skilled and ready man of affairs.

Beyond a doubt, the chief danger of a disagreement at this period between Columbus and his sovereigns lay in the excessive expenditure in which the expedition involved them. It was originally supposed that the outlay would not greatly pass six million of maravedies. It finally amounted to nearly four times as much, and so vastly exceeded the estimates as to involve the Crown in serious embarrassment, if we may judge from the monotonous complaints. This was used by Soria and his following to prejudice the King especially, against Columbus. That the attempt wholly failed is probably due less to any innate sentiment of magnanimity on the part of the parsimonious Ferdinand than to the hopes which he built of receiving immediate and considerable returns of gold and precious drugs from the garrison of forty-two men which the Admiral had left at Navidad with such stringent orders to collect the greatest possible amount of treasure before his return. We find this sanguine expectation repeatedly recorded in the letters of Ferdinand and Isabella to Columbus prior to the latter's departure from Cadiz. One of the first appointments made by their Majesties, in the beginning of May, was that of Gomez de Telles, an officer of their



household, to be receiver for them "of all which should be out there [in Hispaniola] belonging in any wise to us." So confident were they on this score that, to mitigate the hardship of the office, they promised Telles that, if it should inconvenience him to remain in the Indies more than "a few days," he might return with the first ships which Columbus was to send back. Again, in giving Columbus the cumulative rank of Captain-General of this expedition, their Majesties named Antonio de Torres, an officer high in their favor, as second in command, with the especial duty of taking charge of the vessels of the fleet which were to bring to Spain the treasures accumulated by the outpost at Navidad. Bernal Diaz de Pisa, the comptroller, was directed to keep as exact an account of "all the gold, spices, and other things" which were shipped from the Indies, as he did of all that was sent there from Spain. In writing to Columbus before his departure, their Majesties again refer to this matter, saying that they think it best that he send back to Spain all the ships he does not need to retain at Navidad laden "with what may be in store there." The Admiral himself partook of this expectation, for later on he asked to be instructed as to whom to deliver the gold of Navidad; to which their Majesties replied, "It is not needful that we name any one from here, so long as you send it by some one who you know will bring it with care and safely deliver it to our representative." That the returning vessels were to bring a large and valuable cargo back to Seville in a few months, which should go far towards reimbursing the Crown for the heavy outlay now being made, was considered to be beyond dispute, and no doubt influenced both their Majesties and the Admiral in keeping so close a watch on the movements of Portugal.





### III.

#### THE BEGINNING OF EMIGRATION.

SEVENTEEN vessels rode at anchor in the harbor of Cadiz, awaiting the orders of the Admiral of the Ocean Sea. Three of these were ships, properly speaking,—caracks of 200 or 300 tons burthen,—the “Gallega,” a Biscayan craft, as her name indicates, the “Maria Galante,” on which the Admiral sailed, and a third whose name is not given. The remaining fourteen were better adapted to purposes of exploration, being caravels of light draft and small tonnage, varying from thirty or forty to seventy or eighty tons. Among the latter was one which bore the proud distinction of having already made the hazardous passage,—one whose clumsy bows had parted the quiet waters of many a land-locked harbor in the mysterious Indies, and whose rude timbers had borne the shock of many a gale in seas whose very existence had been denied for a thousand years. We find no particular mention of the sturdy little world-finder in the scanty chronicles of the day: if any of the thousands who watched the flotilla as it lay off the Cadiz mole pointed her out as worthy of remark, it was doubtless some weather-beaten seaman who had made the previous voyage with the Señor Colon and spoke with pride of the “Niña” as a mute witness to the truth of the wonders he related. But, all unheralded as she was, the staunch caravel was destined to acquire fresh fame upon this new cruise and to write her name again on History’s page before she joined the ships of Jason and Ulysses, of Hanno and Necho, in the shadowy realms where drift *in saecula saeculorum* the



phantom craft which have taught mankind that the horizon is but the To-morrow of the physical world.

On Tuesday, the 24th of September, all was ready aboard the fleet, and the Admiral issued his orders to weigh anchor on the following morning. It is not likely that there was much rest on the crowded ships. The spirit of ambition and adventure was too rife in that tumultuous throng to allow the eve of their departure for the Golden Indies to be passed in inglorious peace. Their plans, their hopes, their deeds, their destinies, had to be vaunted, debated, and challenged in turn on such an occasion, or the followers of the Admiral would have been no true children of sunny Spain. On shore, too, the vigil of excitement was kept, for the good people of Cadiz took both interest and pride in the sailing of the expedition. Its success meant for their city, in the near future, busy wharves and teeming warehouses; cargoes of spices, of silks, of slaves, perchance of gold; profits for their merchants and brilliant careers for their lads. Thus, as the night grew old and the land breeze drew down from the heights, it bore across the bay towards the ships the shouts and cries of friends on shore, to mingle with the louder uproar of the multitude afloat. When day dawned on Wednesday, the 25th, both the decks and the beaches were thronged with expectant crowds. The creaking of tackle and shouts of command bore witness to the immediate sailing of the fleet, and the slowly hoisting sails waved a ghostly *adios* through the gray morning light to the assemblage which lined the water-front. The Admiral's flagship was the first to get under weigh, leading the fleet out past the Diamond Bank and so to the open sea. As the sails filled and the vessels gathered way, the cheers from ship and shore mingled with the blare of trumpet and roll of drum, until the whole scene took on the aspect of a joyous pageant. Before the sun rose, the bows of the little squadron were breasting the Atlantic billows and the first great emigration to the New World was fairly begun.

One picturesque incident we owe to the letters of an eye-witness who was watching the stirring scene. Among the vessels at anchor in the harbor was a Venetian fleet,

which had entered the port a few days before. Now, as the Spanish squadron swept out into the open, the hardy sea-dogs of the Adriatic lined their bulwarks and shouted lustily their wishes for a fair passage and a speedy return, after the generous fashion of sailor-men. If, as he stood on the poop of his flagship, the pulse of Columbus quickened while he listened to these cheers, his pride was justifiable; for Venice was the ancient rival of Spain in the navigation of the European seas, and her sailors had been the Admiral's own foes on many an occasion in the long-past days when he sailed under the orders of his native Genoa. For centuries the Queen of the Adriatic had held the keys of the only gates to the Orient, through the world-old road of Syria and Egypt; but the caravels now exchanging *vivas* with her galleys in the Andalusian harbor were bound for the ports of Cipango and Cathay by a route which was still a mystery to all the world save their Majesties of Spain and their Admiral, but which the latter did not doubt was destined to wrest from Venice her long-held commercial supremacy. Unconscious as they were of any such sequel, the shouts with which the men of St. Mark hailed the new Viceroy of the Indies, as the "*Maria Galante*" glided by, were the *Morituri Salutamus* of the passing traffic of the marble city in the lagoons.

In compliance with his instructions Columbus steered a southwest course as soon as he was off soundings and headed direct for the Canaries, thus avoiding all chance of an approach to the coasts of Portugal. The weather was fair, the breeze favorable, and ere long even the keenest eye could see nothing in the North but the same tumbling sea which stretched away into the haunted West.

"The fleet which their Catholic Majesties, our Sovereigns, have sent from Spain to the Indies and the government of their Admiral of the Ocean Sea, Christopher Columbus, by the divine permission set sail from Cadiz the 25th day of September in the year 1493, with weather and wind favorable for our course. This weather lasted two days, during which we made about fifty leagues; then it changed for other two days, during which we made little or nothing. After this it pleased God that the good

weather should return, so that in two days more we arrived at the Great Canary, where we made a port."

So opens the journal or report which Dr. Chanca, surgeon of the fleet, wrote for the information of the Municipal Council of Seville, his native city. Its prosaic baldness is strikingly indicative of the widely diverse sentiment with which the sailing of the first and second expeditions of Columbus were regarded, and no homily could be more eloquent of the instability of human emotions. It was only thirteen months since the three little vessels had left Palos on their desperate undertaking; only six since the "Niña" had returned with her amazing evidences of prodigious discovery and her tidings were hailed by the learned of all Europe as the fulfilment of ancient prophecy; only four since, as the result of that first voyage, the burly profligate who arrogated to himself the authority of Omnipotence had bestowed the half of the world upon the monarchs who had advanced a few thousand dollars to his "beloved son Christopher Columbus" for the mighty venture. And yet, upon a repetition of that voyage, we find one of the few men of education engaged therein jotting down in colorless sentences his notes about the weather, as though a journey to the Indies were no longer an occasion for special comment. The novelty of the Admiral's famous exploit had worn off; the finding of the New World was already an old story.

To this same indifference we owe the poverty of detail concerning the companions of Columbus on this expedition. How many of his comrades of the Discovery were now returning with him we cannot determine. Some of them certainly were, but their number at best was insignificant in comparison with that of the new men who packed the vessels far beyond their normal capacity. When a muster was made, after leaving Spain, it was found that fifteen hundred souls were crowded into the quarters originally destined for one thousand. Here was more trouble assured for the near future; for the provisions which were ample for the smaller number would be scanty for half as many more. A month's voyage, in an open caravel under

a tropical sun, which would be barely endurable with the larger allowance of room, would be insupportable when this was reduced by one-half; and the intruders, as "no man's men," not being in the royal pay-rolls, would have a constant pretext for complaint and mischief-making. Presumably, moreover, they were in large part those who had already been rejected when the applicants were examined at Seville, and hence would bear no good will towards the commander or his lieutenants. Fortunately for the Admiral, there was also a contingent of men of substance and reputation who might be depended upon to support his authority, — at least until this should conflict with their own pride or interests. Too many of them, indeed, held their appointments direct from the Crown and considered themselves entitled, in case of dispute, to appeal from the Admiral to their Majesties; but this source of weakness did not develop at the outset. Rather did Columbus have cause to congratulate himself as he thought of the men who had been chosen to accompany him, — officers who had won distinction in the royal armies; officials of trust and confidence in Court and Council; dignitaries of the great military orders; churchmen of noted sanctity and ardor. Surely, he might have argued, so goodly a company could be trusted to sustain him in any contingency which should arise; if not from any sentiment of personal loyalty, at least from the allegiance they owed the Crown and its interests. Only on this hypothesis can we account for the complacency with which he bade farewell to Spain and started on an absence which must necessarily be a long one, and during which, but for these men of the better sort, he must stand absolutely alone amid surroundings and in circumstances which would appal the most reckless adventurer, were he to think of facing them unsupported.

How small a proportion of his followers proved worthy of their leader's confidence the sequel will show; but there were many in the number, disloyal as well as loyal, who achieved their share of fame in the opening decades of our continent's history. Among them were Ponce de Leon, of melancholy Floridian fame; Diego de Alvarado, who fought

so masterfully with Pizarro; Francisco de Garay, who ruffled it so bravely against Cortez; and many another who helped storm Mexico and threw the dice for the spoils of Cuzco. On the Admiral's flagship was his younger brother, Diego, whom Columbus had summoned from Genoa to share his fortunes when he found himself a famous man six months before. "A virtuous person, very sensible, peaceable of disposition, and rather straightforward and well-meaning than reserved or designing. He was always soberly dressed, almost like a priest, and I believe he thought to be a bishop, and that the Admiral sought to make him one, or at least to obtain for him some preferment in the Church." This is the opinion of a writer who knew all the brothers Colombo, or Columbus,—Fray Bartolomé de las Casas, himself afterwards bishop of Chiapas in Yucatan but better known by his nobler title of Protector of the Indians. His father, Pedro de las Casas, was with Columbus on this second voyage, but not the son, as is most usually asserted. A vivid contrast to Diego Columbus, who proved himself no faint heart despite his clerical tastes, was Alonso de Hojeda, a youth of twenty-one years, who had already attracted the attention of his sovereigns by his deeds of prowess and now commanded one of the caravels. Attached to the retinue of that Duke of Medina Celi whose powerful patronage Columbus had enjoyed when he first came to Spain in 1484 and by whom his project of discovery was first presented to the Queen, Hojeda had the best of influences in his favor when he applied to the Admiral for a place in his second expedition. We have the testimony of his commander that the sinewy young Andalusian soldier was "a very intelligent lad and possessed of a daring spirit," on which account Columbus entrusted him with more than one important mission. His fame rests less on these, however, than on his exploits when prosecuting voyages of his own along the coasts of Terra Firma; for Hojeda was the prototype of all the long line of throat-cutting Spanish butchers who, under the thin disguise of an alleged concern for their spiritual welfare, carried fire and sword among the peaceable inhabitants of the western world. Others there were

in the motley throng on the caravels who achieved their measure of a like notoriety, but whatever distinction attaches to priority in evil belongs here to Hojeda, and none contributed more generously than he to the black record of cruelty, extortion and rapine which weighed so heavily against the brilliant achievements in the New World of which Castile was so justly proud. Still one more figure may be detached from the throng,—that of Juan de la Cosa, the seaman who, even in the days of Magellan, Cabot, and Cabral, came to be known as “the ablest pilot of his times.” No one, not excepting Columbus, crossed the Atlantic oftener or explored more persistently the unknown coasts of the unnamed continent. Unfortunately, later on he transferred his allegiance from the Admiral to Hojeda, and met his death, like the brave Spaniard he was, fighting single-handed against a horde of savages on one of the forays led by his hot-headed associate. To him we owe the oldest map of the western world which has come down to us, and to him Americus Vespucci was in later years still more indebted for much of the knowledge of which he made such skilful use.

Vespucci himself was not engaged in this voyage. There is no evidence to show (for his own assertions as to dates go for nothing) that he ever crossed the Western Ocean before 1499.<sup>1</sup> But he had a left-handed connection with the expedition, for he was factor, or manager, or whatever it was, for Juanoto Berardi, the contractor who supplied in large part the outfit for the fleet. No one at this late date

<sup>1</sup> Professor Fiske, in his masterly “Discovery of America,” has laid the shade of Vespucci under lasting obligations by his ingenious and powerful argument in support of Vespucci’s date, 1497, for the discovery of Yucatan, Mexico, and Florida by Vicente Yañez Pinzon and Solis, accompanied by the Florentine in a subordinate capacity. At the same time, Vespucci himself asserts that the natives of *Lariab*—which Professor Fiske identifies with the Mexican coast—called themselves *Cariabi*, which is obviously the same as Caribs and entirely inconsistent with the Yucatan-Mexico theory; and both Las Casas and Peter Martyr explicitly declare that Pinzon and Solis made their voyage *after* the return of Columbus from his last expedition in 1504. Herrera, whom Professor Fiske quotes in support of his argument, merely copied from Las Casas and *omitted* the latter’s allusion to Columbus.



believes that the imaginative Florentine really entered into a deep-laid scheme to saddle his entirely commonplace name upon the continent he was so far from discovering. Perhaps the worst that can be charged to him is that he husbanded his eloquence when a very few words of honest disavowal would have saved him from being branded as a fraud for four hundred years, and ourselves from the necessity of explaining that, although we call ourselves "Americans," we really know better. At all events, his first connection with the continent discovered by Columbus consisted in the furnishing to this fleet of a great quantity of supplies, — provisions and ship-stores of all kinds. It may have been only an unhappy coincidence that most of the casks the contractors supplied leaked so that water became scarce and a year's store of wine ran into the bilges of the caravels within the month, and that the biscuit and salt meat could not stand the voyage. The Admiral, in reporting the facts, does not intimate that it was Vespucci's fault, for to the day of his death he was a loyal friend to the glib Florentine; but these untoward events did happen, and Vespucci was the responsible agent for the fitting-out of the ships: so that it should appear that he was no more fortunate, at this early period, in the integrity of his supplies than he was, later on, in that of his log-books.

We wish that we might know with equal assurance of the presence on or absence from the flagship of a far more interesting personality and one far more closely connected with the finding of the western hemisphere. Whether among the Admiral's associates was to be seen the spare form of Fray Juan Perez, of Marchena, lately father superior of the convent of La Rabida at Palos, is unfortunately a disputed question. Owing to the frequent and excessive divergences which had existed in the computations made by the pilots of the "Santa Maria," "Pinta," and "Niña" in the prior voyage, Columbus had proposed to their Majesties, before leaving Seville, the appointment of an astronomer to accompany him on his return to the Indies, whose duty it should be to study the changing stars and

record his observations for the greater security of the pilots in making their observations. He was himself far more deeply versed in this art than most navigators of the day and had been most fortunate in his own estimates of latitude and longitude on the former expedition; but, either because he had found the risk of relying on one set of observations to be too great, or because he wished to have the assistance of a trusty coadjutor in the work of navigation, he had brought the proposal before the King and Queen. One man there was, abundantly qualified for the position, who had the confidence both of the sovereigns and their Admiral. That one was the learned friar whose interest in astronomy and its sister science, geography, had stood Columbus in such good stead when he knocked at the gate of the little convent above Palos two years before, as he was leaving Spain, disheartened. As successful advocate before the Queen of the plans of Columbus for a western voyage, there were peculiar reasons why the appointment of Juan Perez should be acceptable to all interested. Their Majesties accordingly forwarded to Columbus, just prior to his sailing, a commission for the office of astronomer, accompanied by a letter which strikingly manifests the extreme consideration with which they deferred to the Admiral's wishes. "It seems well to us," they wrote, "that you should take with you a capable astronomer, and that Fray Antonio of Marchena would be a good man for this office, both because he is skilled in that art and because he has always seemed to us to agree with your views. Therefore, if you think well of him for the place, let him go; if not, then any one else you may choose. We send you our commission for him with the name in blank; fill it in for whomever you think should go. But do not delay a single hour on this account; for if he does not go now he can follow in some one of the caravels which we shall have occasion to send after you to inform you of what happens here." Unhappily the record goes no further; nothing authoritative remains for us to determine whether the priest to whom America owes so much sailed for the new lands with the man he had aided so



efficiently to find them. It is not probable that he did, for Columbus makes no mention of his friend in recording, later on, the names of those who rendered service on this expedition, and an intentional omission is not conceivable. From this time Fray Juan Perez of La Rabida — the Fray Antonio of Marchena, as some called him — disappears from the record.

Little did the mass of the Admiral's followers care for the means by which the New World<sup>1</sup> was discovered or the people who had planned the deed. All they cared for was to reach speedily those distant shores where both spices and gold "grew," and where there were none to oppose their harvesting save naked savages or, at the worst, the ill-armed levies of some Tartar prince. As for the Sea of Darkness across which lay their path, its mystery was exploded. The Admiral and his men had crossed and recrossed it in safety a few months before, and they knew whither to steer. It was small concern of any one else where the new lands lay.

On Wednesday, the 2nd of October, the eighth day after leaving Cadiz, the fleet came in sight of the Great Canary and made for the first harbor. Columbus had wished to reach Gomera, another of the Canary group, where there was a settlement of some size from which he could obtain fresh supplies and water; but one of the caravels had sprung a leak and he made for the nearest port to repair it. It was not until after midnight that he could continue his voyage, and then a succession of calms detained him until the 5th, when he anchored before Gomera. Here he spent two days in taking on wood and water, fowls, swine (eight of these interesting animals, at seventy-five cents each), sheep, goats and calves, and a stock of seeds and cuttings of oranges, lemons, citrons, melons, and other fruits and vegetables. When he had stopped here the year before, on his outward voyage, the townspeople had filled his inexperienced sailors with wild tales of the horrors of

<sup>1</sup> We use the phrase advisedly; not as intimating that it was so called at the time of which we write, but that it was such in fact to all who had heard of the strange lands oversea.

the unknown Western Ocean, and prophesied for captain and crew alike a dreadful annihilation. Now they, too, looked with complacency upon the conversion of what had been from time immemorial the Sea of Terrors into an ocean highway, and cheerfully drove their thriving trade with the man whom twelve months ago they had considered a hair-brained enthusiast sailing to a certain doom.

But the Admiral was in no mood to tarry at Gomera and exchange "I told thee so's" with the men who had until so lately believed that only Chaos lay west of their islands. By Tuesday, the 7th, he was ready to hoist all sail and stand for the farther side of the Atlantic. He had promised Diego de Arana and the thirty-eight men left at the fortress of Navidad under the protection of King Guacanagari that he would make all speed to return to them; and, now that all was ready, he was anxious to redeem his pledge. Before leaving Gomera he handed the pilot of each vessel a sealed packet, containing the course to be sailed in order to reach Guacanagari's territory in Hispaniola, with positive injunctions not to break the seals unless the squadron should be dispersed by some tempest. In that case the pilots were to steer direct for Navidad; but, failing such disaster, they were merely to follow his lead. This precaution he deemed necessary in order to avoid all possibility of any knowledge of his route being communicated intentionally or by accident to the Portuguese; for he still expected to encounter them somewhere before reaching the Indies. This provision made, he weighed anchor and started on what Dr. Chanca naïvely describes as "the long journey it was proposed to make without seeing land." The fleet encountered calm weather shortly after leaving port, and it was not until the 13th that they passed Ferro, the westernmost of the Canaries, and got fairly out to sea. Columbus felt some anxiety to get clear of the archipelago, for it was just here that, the year before, a Portuguese flotilla had almost succeeded in intercepting him as he began his westward passage. No signs of an enemy now appeared, however, and the expedition settled down to the dull routine of the voyage that was ahead of them.

“By God’s blessing favorable weather returned to us,” Dr. Chanca writes, “the best that ever fleet enjoyed on so long a course; so that, having left Ferro on the 13th of October, we saw land on the twentieth day thereafter. We should have seen it in fourteen or fifteen, if the flagship had been as good a sailer as the other vessels; for often the others had to shorten sail, as they were dropping us far astern. In all this time we encountered no gale, save on the eve of St. Simon, when one fell upon us which for four hours placed us in great straits.”

There is little to be added from other sources to the worthy surgeon’s brief record of the voyage. Columbus steered a more southerly course than in the previous year, when he held his ships due west from the Canaries in the belief that by so doing he should the sooner reach the Asiatic shores. He was moved by several considerations to strike out for the lower latitudes in this new venture, but chiefly because by so doing he should more probably reach the great islands which, his Indian interpreters had affirmed, lay to the southeast of Hayti, when he left the Bay of Samaná in the preceding February, homeward bound. In that direction, his native guides assured him, were to be found the homes of those savage man-eaters at the mention of whose very names they shook with dread; there, too, was Matinino, the island peopled only by warrior-women; there the land of Guanin, formed of solid gold. To visit these on his way to Hispaniola was motive enough to the mind of an explorer, but a stronger reason suggested itself to Columbus. On the first voyage, days before reaching San Salvador, both Martin Alonzo and himself were convinced by the flight of birds and other signs that land was to be found in the Southwest. The former was disposed to alter their course to make it, but Columbus insisted that their objective was the eastern extremity of Asia; and the islands to the southwest, if such they were, must be sought on a subsequent cruise. Now, however, he desired to ascertain, if it could be done without too great delay, their character and position; for, he argued, if they in reality lay on the course to Hispaniola and so much nearer Spain, as

appeared, their possession was a matter of the first importance in view of the present elaborate projects of acquisition and colonization in the Indies. There had also been some vague talk while he was coasting along Hayti of a great mainland to the south, and by bearing in that direction it was possible he might come upon, or at least learn more about it. Moreover, there was that hint of the Portuguese geographers to which King Ferdinand had referred, — that other lands, perhaps a continent, would be found lying south of the equator between the Cape of Good Hope and the line of demarcation fixed by the Papal Bull; and this it behooved Columbus to investigate. Finally, it was a fundamental proposition in the cosmography of the day that the greater treasures of India lay in its southernmost extremity, — wherever that might be, — or in the adjacent islands. Columbus had already alluded to this as his own conviction in the journal of the year before, and he now determined to go as far toward the south as he deemed advisable at the time. If Cuba, Hayti, and the other islands which he had found farther north had yielded such abundant promise of future wealth, what might he not find in the lands which lay nearer the equator, in those glowing regions which, as King Ferdinand observed, “owing to their neighborhood to the sun, must be very profitable and richer than all the others”? Had it not been for his anxiety to reach the garrison left at Navidad, there is every reason to believe that he would, even on this voyage, have headed well down into the southwest, crossed the Line, and struck the coast between the Orinoco and the Amazons.

The fleet pursued its unvexed way across the unfamiliar sea, and the same marvels presented themselves to the consideration of sailors and landsmen alike as had been encountered by the superstitious crews of a year ago; but now there was no thought of running aground on the fields of Sargasso, or being driven into limitless space by the monotonous easterly breeze. Even when, on the eve of St. Simon, after a furious gale of several hours' duration, the ghostly flames of the sacrosants flickered at masthead and

yard-arm, they evoked only a chorus of *Ave Marias* and *Laudates* from the ships' companies, who saw in them the good St. Elmo's promise of smoother seas and kinder gales. It was well, perhaps, that no fiercer storms were encountered; for a number of the ships were as leaky as the water-butts they carried, and, between the heat of the sun, the labor of bailing, and the short allowance both of wine and water, any prolonged season of bad weather would have found the fleet ill-prepared to resist it. Fortunately, just as the discomforts of the voyage were beginning to tell on the less enduring of the company, those more skilled in such matters began to discern signs of proximity to land. On October 24th the pilots estimated that they had made 450 leagues from the Canaries, which would put them in about that longitude where Columbus had first begun to observe such signs on his former voyage and now hoped to strike land. Shortly thereafter a single flying-fish came aboard one of the ships and was hailed as a harbinger of land,—a puny herald from the shores of the mighty continent of Asia. Still later, the heavy massing of clouds in the afternoon skies, accompanied by sudden and violent downpours of rain, were interpreted as a sure portent of a neighboring coast, and all became watchful and eager. By the 1st of November the fleet was within the charmed zone in which lies the noble chain of islands we call the Caribbees. The practised eye of the Admiral accumulated so much evidence of the nearness of land that, in accordance with his custom on nearing a coast, he ordered sail to be shortened on all the vessels at sundown and a double watch to be kept. Two days more were passed in strained expectancy. Little doubt that they were busily employed by those on board in the polishing of arms and armor, the furbishing of gaudy apparel, and the preparation for a befitting entry into whatever port or city they might reach. The weariness and indolence of the long sea journey gave way to extravagant anticipation and the construction of fantastic dreams: the adventurous were heroes all in their own conceit; the covetous, rich beyond the dreams of avarice; the pious, blessed with a harvest of countless rescued

souls; the careless, happy in the thought of liberty and license. It was not in human nature, especially Latin nature, to be otherwise than buoyant, in their situation. At any moment the lookout in the tall castle at the bows might sing out that he saw the outlines of the new world which held the assured fortunes of every man of the fifteen hundred. Of the conditions, environments, or qualities of those fortunes they neither knew nor cared; suffice it that they were there. Meantime they were sailing in a world of magic, where the skies were as blue as their own Mediterranean seas and the ocean a so much deeper azure that the sky was pale by contrast; where by day the cloudless vault above was sustained by massive foundations of snowy vapor lying on the horizon's edge, which at the sun's setting became domes of burnished gold supporting vast arches of glittering opal and mother-of-pearl suspended above a lake of fire; where at night the familiar stars, though all misplaced, seemed far nearer and more brilliant for the change, and the very air itself took on a strange, caressing sweetness; where at all times, by day as well as by night, the steadfast Trade-wind hummed in the rigging and sang past the ear as though the spirits of the mermaids were abroad. There was reason even for the men of favored Seville and Cordova to feel that they were in another and more beautiful world.

On Saturday, the 2nd of November, the pilots made their computations of the distance sailed since leaving Ferro. Some made it 780 leagues, others 800, others more or less. The variation was not great and their substantial agreement heightened the confidence all felt of soon seeing land. The signs multiplied as the day wore on, and the Admiral's trained eye saw in the color of the water, the haziness of the horizon, and other like omens the certainty of an early landfall. The night was passed in anxious watching. Who can doubt that the keenest lookout was that of the Admiral himself? No vagrant light appeared, as on that wakeful October night of the past year, to hint of an inhabited country hidden by the curtain of darkness, nor did a friendly moon, as then, ride overhead to illumine the black



seas and touch with silver the distant beaches. Yet, as steadily as the passage of the hours, more than one huge bulk was rising above the horizon and arraying itself across the path of the hurrying ships as they noiselessly drove deeper into the western shadows. So rapidly did these grand forms lift, that the nearest one at length loomed forbidding and distinct against the dusky sky, even in that darkest hour which is said to precede the dawn; and the weary watchers on the Admiral's ship were startled by a sudden cry out of the darkness, "The largess to me, Señor Admiral, for there is land!" The cry was echoed from ship to ship, and answering shouts bore witness to the joy with which the welcome tidings were received. "I do not know any one who had not seen enough of water," pithily observes Dr. Chanca, in recording the delight with which the news was hailed; and we may accept his sentiment as that of his fifteen hundred companions.

The impatience of the waiting voyagers was not long taxed, for within an hour the gray morning light began to break, and even before the rising sun appeared above the horizon its rays were gilding the stately summits which rose ahead of the fleet to a height of 5000 feet. It was day-break on Sunday, *Domingo*, the 3rd of November, and the Admiral christened the island (for such it clearly was) *la isla Dominica* (Sunday Island). To the right and left other majestic outlines showed themselves, betokening other islands within easy sail; but for the present all eyes were rivetted on the panorama unfolding before them as the sunlight, driving the white mists before it, crept down the mountain sides, penetrated the deep valleys, and at length flooded sea and land with its early splendor. None, except the Admiral and such as had already watched with him from a vessel's deck the breaking of day on the sierras of Eastern Cuba and Northern Hayti, had ever witnessed such a vision before; probably those who now saw for the first time the glory of early morning among the Caribbees never again felt, from a similar cause, the same emotions of exuberant delight and admiration. Imagination cannot picture a more romantic and inspiring ending to a voyage whose



result was so purely speculative, than to sail from the darkness of a night like all that had preceded it into the unsullied beauty of early day off the windward shores of Dominique.

Orders were issued that the ships and their crews should be dressed in gala array preparatory to the formal act of landing and taking possession of the new discovery. The vessels were brought closer to the land and an unavailing search made for some accessible port. They had struck the coast where the rugged conglomerate cliffs rise precipitously from the water's edge, and although these were broken here and there, so that deep ravines and open valleys could be seen leading up into the heart of the towering ranges beyond, no safe anchorage could be found. For more than a league the Admiral led the way along the shore, without discovering a harbor or a trace of habitation. As far as the eye could penetrate inland the island, from the ocean's margin to the summit of the idle craters which crowned the loftiest peaks, was covered with a dense forest. The men were impatient to explore the secrets of a country which was literally hidden beneath so glorious a wealth of verdure and exhaled on the morning air a subtle perfume suggestive of myriads of flowers and spices, at a season when foliage and flowers were a rarity in their own Spain; but the Admiral would not risk his boats or his people in the venture. Some ten or twelve miles to the north of Dominica he had observed another island, much smaller in size and apparently much more accessible, since its outlines were far less mountainous than those of the larger one. Detaching a caravel to continue the reconnoissance for a port along the coast of Dominica, he sailed northwards with the remainder of the fleet. On nearing the island he found that it offered no difficulty to his disembarking, and, selecting a convenient harbor, brought his ships to anchor and made preparations for the solemn ceremony of taking possession of these new territories and their circumjacent seas for the Crown of Spain.

Shortly after noon the placid waters were alive with scores of small craft, plying between the vessels and the strand.

The Admiral entered his barge, grasping the royal standard with both hands, and was rowed ashore with all the ceremony established for the passage of an officer of his rank. He was followed by the clergy, his principal officers, by the commanders of the vessels, their pilots, the men of rank attached to the expedition, and, finally, by a large proportion of the ships' companies and crews. Once landed, a convenient spot was chosen and the forces arrayed around their leader, who, unfurling the royal banner with one hand and unsheathing his sword with the other, took possession of the islands in sight, the sea which embraced them, and all the unseen lands its waves might lave. This he did, Dr. Chanca tells us, "in the manner provided by law"; a truly Castilian way of reporting the appropriation of that half of the world's surface whose existence had been denied within the twelve-month. The worthy surgeon, doubtless, meant no more than that his chief broke the branches, dipped up the water, and piled the hillock of earth as he had done at San Salvador on the day of its discovery, practising therein the form adapted by still earlier discoverers on African shores and mid-Atlantic islands. To this simple political ceremony succeeded the more elaborate offices of the Church, and the new Viceroy set an example of attentive reverence to his followers as Fray Boíl and his dozen of tonsured associates recited, for the first time in the western lands, those prayers and invocations which were to prove so fatal a shibboleth to their unhappy natives.

The Admiral named this lesser island Maria Galante, — from the vessel he commanded, so it is said; but it is more likely that the name both of ship and island had a common origin in the invocation to Holy Mary, Full of Grace, — *Galante*. As soon as the formalities of taking possession were finished and duly certified to by the attendant notary, the assembled throng dispersed in all directions, eager to feast their ocean-wearied sight upon the strange nature which surrounded them. They noted the dense forests which grew to the water's edge, the unfamiliar palms and vines which filled their dark recesses, the novel spectacle

of blossom, fruit, and bud upon one and the same tree, and the absence of any sign of the approaching winter's touch upon the lavish vegetation around them. Some of the saunterers found a tree, the fragrance of whose bark and foliage convinced them that it bore the coveted cloves; others cautiously gathered and examined the singular fruits which abounded on all sides; still others plucked the dainty *manzanilla* and, deceived by its beauty, tasted warily of it, only to have mouth and face swollen and deformed by the violence of its poison. Much as there was to delight the eye and charm the senses of men who had been cooped unwholesomely in narrow quarters for so many tedious weeks, it soon became apparent that Maria Galante would yield nothing more substantial to protracted exploration. No signs of habitation were found, and the Admiral, after passing two or three hours on the island, gave orders for his people to reëmbark on the ships. His object was to make sail at once for another island, of huge bulk and lofty height, which lay at a distance of some fifteen or twenty miles to the north of Maria Galante; but he found it necessary to wait until late in the afternoon for the return of the caravel he had detached to coast along Dominica. This vessel reported that she had at length discovered a good port and seen both houses and people, so the Admiral was satisfied that these lordly islands were not unpopulated. The fact was of importance to him, because, according to his reckoning, these were either the homes of the Caribs, or Cannibals, of whom the natives of Hayti and Cuba had told such gruesome tales, or else they were the populous lands of gold which, the same informants indicated, lay to the southward. The Admiral lay at anchor that night, taught by his experience among the shallow waters of the Bahamas and Antilles not to make for the islands in the darkness; but as soon as it was daylight he left Maria Galante, and steered for that end of the northern island where, in the words of Dr. Chanca, "there was a great mountain which seemed to want to reach to heaven." As the fleet drew nearer to this peak, the observers noticed that near its summit a broad strip or band of dazzling white was visible, stretching towards its

base; and bets were freely made as to whether this was a stratum of rock, a road, or an immense waterfall. On a closer approach it was seen that from the loftiest summit of the mountain several cataracts descended, the most notable of all being the one which had attracted the Spaniards' interest from so great a distance, and which, from their decks, "appeared to fall from the skies." This was but one of the elements of unwonted grandeur in the scene which lay before them as they drew near to the southern shores of the noble island. Its coast was less forbidding than that of Dominica; but there was the same succession of gigantic terraces sweeping inland and upward from the sea, the same deep glens and open valleys, the same towering precipices, strangely wooded craters, and piercing peaks, and over all was the same dense covering of deep forest shades. Many a wanderer who has seen far more of the globe than was open to Dr. Chanca's experience in 1493 will be disposed to agree with him that, as seen in the early morning, the landscape dominated by the great Soufrière and Sans Tacher of Guadalupe is "the most beautiful thing in the world."

As soon as the fleet drew near the island the Admiral despatched a caravel of light draught to look for a convenient harbor. The little vessel returned in a few hours, and her captain reported that a couple of leagues along the coast he had found a safe port and effected a landing near a native settlement, which had been deserted by its inhabitants as soon as they saw the Spaniards. In the houses were found a quantity of cotton, both unworked and in yarn, a store of food, some parrots of extraordinary size and beauty, and, most important of all, "four or five bones from the legs and arms of men." Of all these articles the captain presented his commander with specimens, but the Admiral neglected the others for the relics of departed humanity. What, to the general sight, were only evidences of the ferocious habits of the wild races of these Indies, were to him a proof of the correctness of his conclusions as to the situation of the dreaded Caribs, at whose mere names the peaceful islanders of San Salvador and Cuba had paled and shaken with terror.

"As soon as we saw them," Dr. Chanca writes, "we suspected that these were the islands of the Caribes, which are inhabited by people who eat human flesh; because the Admiral, guided by the signs which had been made to him on the previous voyage as to this locality by the Indians of the other islands he had before discovered, had directed his course to reach them, not only because they are nearest to Spain, but also because by this route is the shortest way to come to Hispaniola, where he had before left his people. To them we have come, by the mercy of God and the wisdom of the Admiral, as directly as though we followed a beaten and familiar road."

There is no warrant for challenging the sincerity or truthfulness of this surgeon's report. It is free from all trace of servile laudation of his commander's acts and deeds; in fact, it is almost unique among the early records of the period in the straightforward, professional manner in which it relates events as they occurred. In ascribing, under Providence, to the foresight and rare ability of Columbus the successful conclusion of a voyage planned on such broad and comprehensive lines that it was intended, if possible, to establish a permanent route to the new possessions, while it solved the problem as to the habitat of the fierce savages who threatened the peace of the proposed colonies, Dr. Chanca did no more than justice. While cruising along the shores of Cuba and Hayti, Columbus had had pointed out to him every quarter of the compass as that in which the richest countries lay. All he had seen, besides those two great islands, were the Bahamas and the hazy outlines of Porto Rico as, homeward bound, he left the Bay of Samaná. With a world to choose from, he so planned his voyage as to settle the most immediately important geographical and political problems before him, without unduly delaying his arrival at the fortress of Navidad; and in so doing, we believe with Dr. Chanca, he gave new evidence of extraordinary sagacity and courage.

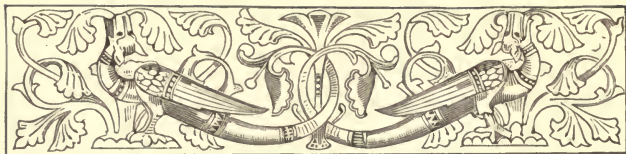
It was too late in the afternoon when the captain of the exploring caravel made his report for the Admiral to attempt a landing; so he contented himself with sailing along the

coast for a couple of leagues, and came to anchor in the port selected by the caravel. As the squadron passed along shore, numbers of native cabins were seen and their inhabitants could be descried fleeing to the woods as the strange winged craft drew near; so the Admiral gave orders that at daybreak a party should land with the Lucayan interpreters and endeavor to communicate with the people.

To the magnificent island whose grand volcanic shapes were fast hiding in the gathering darkness he gave the name of Guadalupe, in fulfilment of a promise made to the monks of a convent nestled among the mountains of that name in the province of Estramadura, where he had gone to pay one of the vows assumed by him during the fearful tempests encountered on his homeward voyage the year before.







#### IV.

#### THE ISLANDS OF THE CANNIBALS.

THERE was no lack of matter for conversation aboard the Spanish ships as they lay at anchor on the night of November 4th, but we may doubt whether much time was spent in discussing the beauties of Nature. Officers and men alike had heard from the Admiral and his earlier followers of the bloodthirsty savages who drove their huge canoes of forty and fifty paddles across wide stretches of those quiet seas and ravaged from the most distant islands the living materials for their horrid banquets, and here they were at close quarters with these very demons. As the fleet made its way to the anchorage, all had seen small parties of natives scurrying into the woods; and the Admiral had remarked that they were as naked as the tribes he had met with on his former voyage. Later, came the report of the captain of the caravel, supported by the parcel of human bones; and thus ample food was furnished for the active Spanish imaginations to work their wildest. The prospect of being brought into actual contact, perhaps conflict, on the morrow with the savage anthropophagi of the Indies, of whom such wild tales were told in European markets and seaports, must have excited many a thrill of qualified anticipation among the soldiers and men-at-arms and led to many a speculation and boast. Fighting was no novelty to the seasoned veterans of the Moorish wars, but they might well dispute as to how it were best to act among such impenetrable forests, and be pardoned a shudder as they spoke of the doom that awaited the prisoner.



The Admiral lost no time in putting his men to the proof. At daybreak he sent two of his captains on shore, accompanied by a strong escort. They entered a neighboring village and were surprised to find that, while most of the inhabitants fled, two young men and half a dozen women ran toward and not away from the Spaniards. These they received, and succeeded also in capturing a number of the fugitives, including a little Carib who was abandoned by the warrior in charge of him. After examining carefully the houses and their contents, the reconnoitring party divided, some returning with their prisoners to the ships, while the rest followed the paths which led inland from the village. Somewhere in the village they came upon what appeared to be the sternpost of a European vessel, and an iron dish, or pan. The former was supposed to be a piece of wreckage carried across the Atlantic by wind or current, or else the timber from the Admiral's wrecked flagship of the first voyage. The pan they could not account for. There is no reason to doubt that more than one ship had been driven across the Atlantic and stranded on western shores prior to the advent of Columbus; but we know no more than those Spanish sailors did, as they debated the origin of the strange jetsam among the palm-thatched huts of Guadalupe. The young Indians were brought before the Admiral, and, with the aid of the San Salvador interpreters, made themselves fairly well understood. They came, they said, from Buriquen (Porto Rico we name it), having been captured there by the Caribs on one of their man hunts. This island where they now were was called Turuqueira, and was the chief home of the Caribs, although they also dwelt on Dominica (which they called Ceyre) and another island known to them as Ayay. They and their men companions were reserved by their captors for future consumption; the women who had fled to the Spaniards were also captives, but were not considered eligible for the cooking-pot. Their destination was matrimony, or the Caribbean substitute therefor. They accounted for the appearance of so few Carib men among the natives seen by saying that ten canoe-loads had

lately gone off on a man hunt, leaving only their women to guard the captives. To prove them, the Admiral asked if they knew where Hayti was. They pointed at once to the northeast, where it lay, though distant from Guadalupe by more than 500 miles, as the homing seabird flies. All this they told, we are informed, "as well as they could, with hands and eyes, and motions and gestures of a soul in distress"; and the Admiral was greatly interested by their narrative.

Meanwhile, a boat had returned to shore for the Spaniards who had remained, and it soon returned with most of them, and also a number of women, who, they affirmed, had fled to them as they marched through the neighborhood. The Admiral, somewhat suspicious of these repeated appeals for protection, ordered that this last batch of refugees should be returned to the beach, loading them with beads, bells, and looking-glasses as an indication of good will. No sooner were they landed and the boat once more on the way back to the ships, than the natives appeared from the woods and coolly appropriated everything the women had received. Later on in the day, when some of the ships' boats went ashore for water, the same women came running down to them again, accompanied by two boys and a young man, all imploring to be taken off. This time they were kept, and added to the Admiral's fund of information by giving him the names of a multitude of islands which they affirmed to lie in those seas, as well as of a certain "great land," which the Admiral thought was probably Terra Firma.

All this coming and going and making of presents had at last convinced the Caribs themselves that no harm was intended to them, and gradually all their women and a few men came down to the waterside to examine the ships, and even waded out to inspect the small boats when these drew up on the beach. The Spaniards called out "*tayno, tayno*," which was the word used by the natives of Hayti and the Bahamas to signify anything good or pleasing. But, as sometimes happens with the linguistic efforts of more modern travellers, this well-meant greeting was gibberish to the Caribs, and they remained on their guard, ready to

take to their heels at the first movement made by their strange visitors to leave the boats.

The Admiral saw no reason for lingering at Guadalupe. He had verified the nature of the people inhabiting these islands and ascertained their condition. From the captives he had learned approximately the distance to Hispaniola and the existence of many islands on the way thither, and he was disposed to hoist sail and pursue his cruise without further delay. So far, no conflict had occurred with the Caribs, and he wished to avoid one. There had been enough of mild excitement and military activity to gratify the ardor of his soldiers and yet not expose them to the danger of becoming provender for the truculent man-eaters. His waiting garrison at Navidad was ever in his mind, and by leaving Guadalupe before nightfall he would be one day nearer them. To his surprise and disgust, a peremptory difficulty barred his departure. Diego Marquez, the royal inspector and captain of one of the caravels, had gone ashore at daybreak, it now appeared, with two of the pilots and a force of eight armed men, and had not since been seen or heard of. This was in direct defiance of the Admiral's authority and orders, and he did not attempt to hide his displeasure. Searching-parties were hastily sent on shore with orders to enter the forest at various points, sounding trumpets and firing arquebuses to attract the missing party. The remainder of the afternoon was spent unavailingly in this manner, and darkness fell with no signs of the absent men. All the gloomy conjectures of the preceding night were now revived. To the perils of the wilderness were added the horrors of an ambushade by the treacherous cannibals. Some little comfort was gathered by their shipmates from the fact that Marquez was accompanied by his pilots; for, they argued, with their aid it would be easier for him to extricate himself if he was merely lost in the woods. If he had been surrounded and overwhelmed by the natives,—well, the bundles of bones and the stories told by the rescued men and women indicated what would be the fate of inspector, pilots, and men-at-arms. In the morning the Admiral despatched new search-

ing-parties, each with its trumpet and with instructions to penetrate the forest in different quarters and spare no effort to find traces of the lost men. The morning passed with leaden feet. "Every hour seemed a year," Columbus tells us, for he was impatient to start for Hispaniola. If the dark wilderness of the woods baffled his search, he would have to abandon the men to their fate and proceed with his voyage. He might, indeed, leave Marquez's own caravel behind, with directions to wait a reasonable time and then to follow the fleet; but he feared there was small chance of her finding Hispaniola alone. When the scouting-parties returned at evening, with no other tidings than a discouraging account of the impassability of the tangled woods, the Admiral reverted to his determination to proceed without the absent party. He was loth to do this, for it seemed like abandoning his men to the most terrible of deaths; but the welfare of his 1500 other companions demanded that he should not keep them confined in their cramped quarters for an indefinite time, and he felt, besides, that his first duty was to reach his garrison at Navidad. After much consideration and discussion he resolved to make a final effort. Liberty was given to all in the fleet who wished to go on shore during the day and there "disport themselves and wash their clothes" at pleasure, with such restrictions as discipline demanded. Alonso de Hojeda was ordered to take forty picked men and get on the track of the missing party, if possible. He was also instructed to make careful observations of all he saw, as he penetrated into the interior of the island, and report upon its products and character. The task was both difficult and dangerous, and the Admiral selected Hojeda as qualified to render the best account of himself in its execution.

Day after day passed without any word of the lost inspector, or of those who were searching for him. The crowd of men of all degrees who hastened ashore to avail themselves of the liberty granted found only too much in the course of their investigations to confirm their gloomiest apprehensions as to the lot of their missing comrades. As

they entered the native cabins within a wide radius from the harbor and examined with curious interest all that they found, the Spaniards were horrified to meet with repeated evidences of the truth of the ghastly tales they had heard concerning the Caribs. Human bones neatly arranged in parcels, carefully prepared skulls hanging from the rafters of many of the huts, other bones from which everything eatable had been picked "so that nothing remained on them except what was too hard to gnaw," and "in one house the neck of a man cooking in a pot," were some of the tangible proofs of the gastronomic tastes of the Indians of Turuqueira. With these suggestive examples before them, the Admiral and his officers subjected the fugitives who were under his protection to a close questioning as to the habits of their captors. They answered without reluctance all that was asked of them, the women in particular speaking with great freedom,—as of a matter not intimately affecting themselves, perhaps, since they ran no risk of ending in the manner under investigation. According to them, the Caribs of the three islands already mentioned systematically raided the islands in those seas, sometimes pursuing their expeditions for a distance of three or four hundred miles. As a rule, they brought together a goodly fleet of canoes and presented a respectable force; the party at present away in the ten canoes from Guadalupe would represent four or five hundred men, for example. They were armed with bows and arrows, and lances or darts, headed with sharpened fragments of turtle, fish, or human bones, which were quite sufficient to kill a naked enemy. On reaching the island they proposed to harry, the Caribs conducted themselves much as the Arab slavers of Central Africa do nowadays. They killed all who opposed them, but wasted no unnecessary lives, capturing all the men and women possible. Such men as were slain were eaten on the spot; the living captives were brought back to the island. Here the men were allowed a certain liberty for such time as they required to reach a proper condition for cooking, and then they were disposed of as the Spaniards had seen. The women added that the Caribs carried mat-

ters so far that they did not scruple to eat their own sons whose mothers were not Caribs. When boys were made prisoners, they were kept as slaves until they reached man's estate and then eaten in their turn. Man's flesh was considered by these interesting ruffians to be "so good that there is nothing like it in the world,"—an opinion which we have ourselves heard asserted, but with much shamefacedness, in later days, by those who knew.

Thus far we have followed Dr. Chanca's extremely business-like and unemotional report of his personal observations of the cannibal practices of the Caribs. Peter Martyr, who might justly pass as a man of science in his generation, was in Medina del Campo in Old Castile when, in the following April, twelve of the Admiral's ships returned to Cadiz. He sought out their commander, Torres, and from him and other faithful and credible men who came with him from the Admiral procured a detailed account of this voyage for the information of his friend and patron, Cardinal Sforza. He writes that they told him that "they found also in their [the Caribs'] kitchens men's flesh, ducks' flesh, and goose flesh, all in one pot; and other on the spits ready to be laid to the fire. Entering into their inner lodgings, they found faggots of the bones of men's arms and legs, which they reserve to make heads for their arrows, because they lack iron. The other bones they cast away when they have eaten the flesh. They found likewise the head of a young man fastened to a pole and yet bleeding." The Admiral himself, according to Las Casas, went on shore one day and entered some cabins, where he saw, together with some looms and other signs of industry, "many heads hanging up and remains of human bones." Dr. Chanca mentions, quite as a matter of course, that he found an "infinite number of men's bones." We know that among scores of tribes, both in America and elsewhere, both in 1493 and at the present day, human flesh was and is sought for and fought for, and eaten for the mere love of it as frequently as for reasons of superstition or revenge. Doubtless some reader of these lines has himself met with men who preferred the meat of their fellow-



creatures to veal or chicken. The writer certainly has. And yet we are asked by those whose self-imposed office is assumed to be "the destruction of a world's exemplar" in the interests of Historical Criticism, to believe that these reports were concocted by Columbus and his followers "to enhance the wonder with which Europe was to be impressed," and that to them "the cruelty of the custom was not altogether unwelcome to warrant a retaliatory mercilessness." "Historians have not wholly decided," we are gravely informed, "that this is enough to account for the most positive statements about man-eating tribes. Fears and prejudices might do much to raise such a belief, or at least to magnify the habits." We have no more sympathy with those who would make a spectacular demi-god of Columbus than we have with those who labor to prove him a vulgar adventurer and discredited romancer; but we humbly submit that this is a question of fact beyond the province of armchair scepticism. Why Columbus and his companions should be accused of cheap (and wholly unnecessary) lying, and yet every missionary and traveller from Oceanica and Darkest Africa be listened to with bated breath and grateful spinal shivers while they relate similar experiences, is a mystery beyond our layman's comprehension.<sup>1</sup>

In the course of their enforced stay in Guadalupe, the Spaniards had opportunity for securing many of the Carib women and a few of their men. These proved to be of forbidding countenance, with long hair, beardless faces stained black around the eyes to render their appearance more ferocious, and with bands of cotton drawn tightly about the knees and ankles to make the calves of their legs bulge out in a grotesque manner. Their cabins were built in a sightly manner of branches wattled with cane, and were thatched with palm-leaves, much as we find them to-day among the

<sup>1</sup> Herrera, writing one hundred years afterwards, affirmed that "to this day the natives of Dominica go to the island of San Juan to hunt men for eating." He adds that many of them had desisted from the practice by reason of the violent colic from which they suffered after eating a Spanish friar!



same mountains. They seemed to have a greater abundance of food than the natives of the other islands, and possessed no small skill in the arts of the potter and the weaver, their hammocks and cloths of cotton being noticeably well made. Notwithstanding this comparative advancement, they were brutal in all their habits, and so great was the terror they inspired that their former captives trembled at the very sight of one, even when they were themselves protected by the Spaniards and the Carib was a prisoner. In a word, every day confirmed further the accounts which the quaking inhabitants of the Bahamas and Northern Hayti had given to the Admiral the year before, when they pointed to the southeast and affirmed that there dwelt the "Canibals," whom he supposed to be the Asiatic anthropophagi of Marco Polo,—the subjects of the Great Khan.

On the fourth day after setting out on their search, Hojeda and his command returned to the fleet. He brought no tidings of Marquez or his men, but told a moving tale of hardship and fatigue endured in his long march through the pathless jungle. Of the riches of Nature, Hojeda had enough to report. Gum mastic, ginger, incense, wax, sandal-wood, and other aromatic treasures, he affirmed, were to be found in quantities. Game birds and songsters of every variety abounded. The land was fertile and the forests full of gigantic trees of precious woods. So well watered was it that he had crossed no less than twenty-six rivers, the waters in many of which came above the belt. He had encountered few natives, and none of these were men. So far as his observations went, it was evident that, in comparison with Cuba and Hayti, Guadalupe was virtually uninhabited.

Shortly after Hojeda's arrival, Marquez himself appeared with his pilots and soldiers and a train of ten women and boy prisoners. "We had already given them up for lost and eaten by these people who call themselves Caribs," writes Chanca; "for there was no reason to believe them lost in any other way, since there went with them some pilots, seamen who knew how to go to and come from

Spain by the stars, and we did not think it possible for them to lose themselves in so narrow a circuit." Both inspector and men were in so dilapidated a condition that their shipmates were filled with pity, which increased when they heard the story of their sufferings among the pathless woods and rugged mountains. They accounted for their long absence by saying that the woods were so dense that they could guide themselves neither by sun nor stars. Utterly without direction or hope, they had wandered among precipices, marsh and jungle, tattered and starved, apprehending an ambush behind every huge buttressed tree or liana-woven thicket. The sailors made shift to climb some of the tallest trees at night, in the hope of getting a glimpse of the polar star, but without avail. In truth, no more emphatic testimony could be borne as to their abject desperation than the attempt to climb by night, in the depth of a tropical forest, up or down the bare shaft of any tree of height apparently sufficient to view the stars. At length, when their exhaustion was complete, a pilot caught the gleam of the sea, and they made their way to the coast. Taking, whether by chance or intention, the right direction, they arrived in safety at the ships. "We were as delighted to see them as though they had just been found," Dr. Chanca tells us; but the Admiral judged that the perilous insubordination of Marquez required reproof. He therefore placed the inspector under arrest, and punished his followers according to their degree; by which necessary measure he made at least nine enemies, one of whom had friends at Court, and afforded his critics, four centuries later, occasion to comment upon the facility with which he estranged the affections of his followers.

On Sunday morning, the 10th of November, the fleet weighed anchor and stood to the north along the leeward coast of Guadalupe, making slow progress on account of light winds. The next day they were clear of the land, and steered for another island, distant some forty miles to the northwest. This also proved to be mountainous in its character, covered with dense forests, and having bold shores rising abruptly from the sea. Owing to the resem-

blance of its wild and rugged contour to that of the famous *peñas* of that name in Spain, the Admiral called this island Monserrate. The Indian women on board the flagship declared that it was desolate, all its inhabitants having been carried off by the Caribs; so no attempt was made to land. From this position a number of other islands were visible east, north, and west, and the fleet was headed a little more to the latter quarter. At a distance of a few miles to the leeward, a single barren dome of rock rose to the height of many hundred feet from waters whose deep blue denoted that they were wellnigh fathomless. Streaked with white and dim-colored patches, the side towards the fleet presented an inaccessible wall of forbidding smoothness, with no other growth than scanty lichens and no other life than screaming sea-fowl. The trained eye of the Admiral remarked its impregnable character, and he noted "that without scaling-ladders and ropes let down from above it appears impossible to reach the top." To this lonely crag he gave the name of Santa Maria la Redonda. Near by were some shoals, where he found anchorage for the night, not caring to risk farther navigation in the darkness. The next morning, soon after getting under way, a long outline was descried in the northeast, which, in comparison with the lofty volcanic summits of its neighbors, was low and regular. Without approaching it closer, the Admiral christened it Santa Maria la Antigua. Continuing on his course and bearing more to the westward, he soon came up to a lofty symmetrical cone rising from the centre of a small island, which reminded him of a snow-clad peak near Barcelona, the scene of his recent triumphs at the Spanish Court. He gave the same name, Nieves, or Snows, to the dead volcano of these distant seas, and as Nevis we still know it. Near to this was still another group of forest-crowned summits, towering far into cloud-land out of the sapphire depths, and this he named St. Christopher, after his patron saint. From here he steered for the largest of the islands to the north, passing by several smaller ones to the westward. Whatever disposition he had to tarry on his way and inspect some of

these inviting lands was put aside. All that he had seen and heard of the Caribs had inspired him with anxious concern for the safety of his forty pioneers at Navidad, and he was even more impatient to reach them than curious to learn the nature and products of the magnificent archipelago through which he was sailing. Past the majestic cliffs of St. Eustacio and Saba, the fleet held on its way towards an island of larger size, where the low savannahs of the coast swept up to a long range of elevated tablelands. To an island of much less size near by, the Admiral gave the name of St. Bartholomew, apparently in affectionate remembrance of the brother who had parted from him six years before to plead his great project of discovery before the English King Henry. As the ships drew closer, the larger island, which he called St. Martin, showed in the cultivated clearings seen along shore evidences of a considerable population. They came to anchor in a convenient harbor, as the Admiral determined to ascertain whether these natives also were Caribs, and verify, if possible, the distance and exact direction of Hispaniola,—not because he was wandering at random, as Dr. Chanca is careful to explain, “but because in doubtful matters one should always seek the greatest possible certainty.” The Spaniards could find no one in the village where they landed to hold converse with, as all the natives had fled at their approach; so the fleet speedily continued its course, steering now almost due west, as they had reached the latitudes wherein Hispaniola should be found.<sup>1</sup>

On the second day after leaving St. Martin, November 14th, the fleet reached an inhabited island to which he gave the name of Santa Cruz (the Holy Cross), from some fanciful idea of its shape. Here he anchored and sent boats

<sup>1</sup> Here occurred one of those trifling incidents which give us an insight into one of the chief causes of his success as an explorer. As the anchors were hoisted home, Columbus noticed that their flukes brought up the *débris* of coral instead of the muddy spoil of Guadalupe's harbor. The observation was not without its significance when we bear in mind the fact that the group of which this is the centre is not of the same distinctively volcanic formation as are the other islands among which he sailed.

ashore to have speech with the people. As usual, the natives betook themselves to the woods, but the Spaniards secured four women and a couple of boys. They also proved to be captives in the hands of the Caribs, and said that this was the island called Ayay by the cannibals and was one of their chief strongholds. A party of thirty men was accordingly landed, to protect the boats' crews who went ashore for water and to make a reconnoissance of the neighborhood. They found much the same kind of village as in Guadalupe, but could discover no traces of the people. While they were absent, a large canoe came around a point of the coast manned by four men, two women, and a boy. At the sight of the Spanish vessels they dropped their paddles and sat gazing in blank amazement at the bewildering spectacle. While thus engaged, the landing-party put off from shore in their barge and started for the ships, only to be surprised in turn by suddenly encountering the Carib canoe. The Indians were still so absorbed in contemplating the extraordinary spectacle of the great winged craft that the barge was almost upon them before they perceived the danger. In a twinkling they had seized their paddles, and began to make for the shore. A skilful movement of the Spanish boat cut off their retreat, and the white men, who sought to capture them unharmed, were on the point of seizing the canoe, when the Indians dropped their paddles, grasped their bows and, both men and women, sent a flight of arrows into the crowded barge. Two of the Spaniards were badly wounded, one with a couple of arrows through the chest, the other with one between the ribs. The interested spectators on the decks of the ships remarked that an arrow discharged by one of the women pierced through a shield carried by one of the soldiers. Before the Caribs could repeat their murderous volley, the barge was steered straight for the canoe, and, striking it squarely, threw its occupants into the water. Little difference did that make, however, for, finding a foothold on a sunken rock as they swam towards land, the Indians faced their assailants and sent another flight of arrows into them, which would have been as disastrous as the first had the soldiers not protected them-

selves with shields and targets. Even when the barge returned against them, they fought so desperately that it was necessary to run a spear through one of the men before he could be dragged inboard. With this exception they were finally secured unhurt and taken aboard the flagship, where, as Peter Martyr says, "they did no more put off their fierceness and cruel countenance than do the lions of Libya when they perceive themselves to be bound in chains." In due time these plucky cannibals were sent to Spain for the greater instruction of the King and Queen, and there Peter Martyr saw them. "There is no man able to behold them," he affirms, "but he shall feel his bowels grate with a certain horror, nature hath endowed them with so terrible, menacing, and cruel an aspect." The Spaniards themselves were inclined to give them full credit for their dauntlessness. "I say advisedly that they possessed great daring," Chanca says in describing the skirmish; "for they were no more than four men and two women, and our men numbered above five and twenty." By degrees they quieted down and even became communicative, telling their captors, among other things, that in Ceyre (Dominica) gold was so plentiful that when they went there, as was their custom, to fell trees for their canoes, each man gathered as much of the metal as he pleased.

After making a stay of six or seven hours at Santa Cruz, the fleet steered for what appeared to be a large and lofty island somewhat to the north. On approaching nearer, it proved to be a group of forty or fifty islands, of which only one was of considerable size. To this the Admiral gave the name of St. Ursula, and to the surrounding archipelago that of the Eleven Thousand Virgins. The channels between these islands were so narrow and tortuous, and the white spray flying on all sides betokened so many hidden rocks, that he attempted no general landing, but sent a caravel of light draught to inspect a few huts, which, by their contents, proved to belong to fishermen. This group, unlike the other islands, was destitute of trees, and the Spaniards fancied they saw indications of valuable metal deposits in the brown, white, and grayish rocks of which it was chiefly com-



posed. The day was passed in getting clear of the skirts of these holy damsels, and at night the westerly course was resumed. Afternoon of the following day found the fleet off the southeastern coast of the great island known to the Indians as Buriquen, from which most of the captives who had fled to the Spaniards at Santa Cruz and Guadalupe had been brought by the Caribs. As they coasted along, close inshore, they saw evidences of considerable population and systematic cultivation. The country along the coast was a beautiful succession of savannahs and rolling hills, while inland the mountains towered skyward, as in the great islands first encountered. The natives on board the Spanish vessels vaunted the beauties and fertility of their home, whose only curse was the periodical incursions of the Caribs. On the other hand, the Caribs on the flagship claimed that the Indians of Buriquen were as bad as they; that they used the same weapons, and when any unlucky man-eater fell into their hands the *lex talionis* was fulfilled to the letter, the genial inhabitants of Buriquen promptly putting their captive beyond all chance of further roving by the simple process of cooking and eating him. In one respect the Caribs had shown themselves to be masters of strategy: they had for so long systematically destroyed or carried off all the canoes of the people of the island that by degrees these had lost all skill in the use of boats and were now virtually impounded within their own borders.

On the afternoon of the 19th the fleet reached the western extremity of the island and came to anchor in a spacious harbor. The Admiral christened this latest discovery St. John the Baptist, and the name still lingers in the Spanish records; but for us it has been displaced by the more familiar one of Porto Rico. In this haven, which is identified with the modern one of Mayagües, the Admiral remained two days, and a large part of his force was allowed liberty on shore. The Spaniards were particularly impressed with the regularity and neatness shown in the arrangement of a native village near their anchorage. A broad plaza or market-place was surrounded by cabins of unusual size, and from it a cleanly swept street led directly to the water's



edge, bounded on either side by walls made of living bamboo wattled with cane. By the seaside was a tall edifice open at the sides, as if intended for a lookout or pleasure-house. Everything in the vicinity denoted recent occupation, but not a native was seen during the time of the Spaniards' visit.

At dawn on the morning of Thursday, November 21st, the fleet left Porto Rico and steered due west. Before night fell it was in sight of a huge range of mountains in that quarter, and the Admiral shortened sail accordingly. Early on the following day, the 22nd, he approached the coast, which at that point was so level and unlike the northern shores of Hispaniola that he had some doubt as to whether he had indeed reached his goal, and the doubt was shared by all who had been with him on the former voyage. The Indian women who were on the flagship insisted that this was in truth Hayti and not some other great island, like Dominica or Guadalupe; so the Admiral sent on shore one of the Indians whom he had taken to Spain from Samaná Bay when leaving Hayti the preceding January. This man was told to ascertain the position of the fleet with reference to Navidad, and to explain to his countrymen the good intentions of the white men, their power and great resources, and the grandeur of their King and nation, as he had so recently seen it in Castile. He gladly accepted the service, was landed on the beach,—and disappeared from history. Las Casas thinks this Haytian was killed by his countrymen as a renegade. We prefer to believe that the sound of his own tongue and the sight of the familiar parrot-feathers and black paint, which formed the simple yet distinctive dress of his fellow tribesmen, pierced through his thin veneering of acquired civilization, and that he cast in his lot again with them, leaving the great Spanish cacique and his big winged canoes to shift for themselves. The Admiral waited in vain for his return, and at length got under weigh and resumed his course along the coast to the north. Toward evening he reached the entrance to a great bay, and had no difficulty in recognizing it as that of Samaná, whence he had taken his departure for Spain on the previous voyage.

He made for the point on its northern side, which he had called Cape Angel, and there came to anchor, partly to have speech with the natives, and partly to bury one of his sailors, a Basque, who had died of wounds received in the skirmish with the six Caribs at Santa Cruz. While a boat carried the body on land, two caravels drew near the shore to guard it. Immediately a crowd of Indians swarmed around the boat, begging to be taken off to the fleet and offering all they possessed in exchange for the trinkets of the Spaniards. The latter refused to take them, not having permission from the Admiral; whereupon two of the eager natives leaped into a canoe and paddled to a caravel, where they renewed their importunities. As many of them wore golden ornaments around their necks and in their ears, the captain thought it best to take them to the flagship, where they were kindly received. They told the Admiral that their king had sent them and their companions to learn what manner of men these strangers were who were seen approaching over the sea. If they were of the same sort as the astonishing beings who had visited his territory earlier in the year, he desired them to come ashore, that he might give them all the gold and provisions they wanted. Evidently the cacique of Samaná bore the white men no grudge for the punishment they had inflicted on his warriors a few months before, but remembered only the priceless gifts of cloth and beads he had received from them. To his invitation the Admiral responded that he would surely pay him a visit at another season, but that he was now in haste to reach the country of Guacanagari. With this reply he sent a present of shirts, sailors' bonnets, and other trifles, and the messengers departed in glee. Their favorable report inspired their companions with confidence, and a thriving traffic in golden ornaments, cassava bread, fruits, and yams was soon established with the Spaniards; for it was clear that the people as well as their king remembered what their visitors of the previous voyage most wanted. But the Admiral this time would not delay a moment longer than was necessary. Even the sight of the yellow metal, for so little of which he had been so willing before to wait so long,

was now of secondary importance; and, weighing anchor, he stood past Cape Angel and turned the "Maria Galante's" bow to the west, in the direction of Navidad.

The perils and excitements of his second passage through the terrible Ocean Sea were over, and again it had proved but a speedy cruise over summer seas, with no more of hardship or danger than the sailors of his and of all times hail as the salt of their existence. A second time he had wrested from these unknown western waters a generous portion of the secrets they had so successfully guarded since the foundations of their deepest caverns were laid, and again he had given to his sovereigns an accession of dominion in comparison with which all the islands in the Midland Sea, from the Bosphorus to the Pillars of Hercules, were as nothing. He had traced far down toward the burning zone, where Earth's choicest products were supposed to be hidden, this line of giant islands which began with Cuba, and found them surpassingly fertile and beautiful, abounding with promise of untold riches. He had solved the mystery of the man-eaters who devastated the northern islands, and formed the opinion that they could easily be subdued and their islands converted into ports of call for the fleets which were to ply between Hispaniola and Cadiz. Finally, he had become imbued with the profound conviction that by steering yet farther south he should find other Guadalupes and Dominicas, if not the mainland of Asia itself. He had learned that the Indians of the Lucayos, Cuba, and Hayti had told the truth when they said, the year before, that there were other great islands to the southeast; why might they not be equally believed when they spoke of the vast country of Caribana, with its mighty kings and hordes of people? From Dominica he had seen the blue mountains of other islands in that quarter, and only sailed away because his men at Navidad were counting the days till his return; what lands and races might not be waiting discovery and annexation in the fiery South? Whatever they were, they must bide his time. His work of exploration must be suspended for a season and his attention devoted to questions of administration and government.

Later on, if God were willing, he should strive to wrest from the ocean the secrets of the South as he had those of the West.

As the fleet sailed along the Haytian coast in quest of Navidad, the Admiral marked the familiar headlands of the rugged shore as they hove in sight, and recalled the name he had given each as he had passed them homeward-bound on the former voyage. There was the Lover's Cape, and that of Father and Son; Spotted Cape, Cape of Good Weather, the Frenchman's, Round Cape, Dry Point, Iron Point, Angel Cape, Silver Mountain, Cape Fairlawn, and then that River of Thanks where Martin Alonzo had landed and secured so much gold before rejoining his deserted commander. Each name suggested some incident of the eventful cruise in January, and there were not wanting tongues to vaunt the exploits of the days of the Discovery at the expense of those of the present voyage. But the mind of the leader was on other things, and it was the Viceroy rather than the Admiral who watched the majestic panorama of forbidding sierra, smiling prairie, rugged promontory, and inviting harbor which was slipping steadily by as the vessels held on their westerly course. Beyond yonder mountains was the province of Cibao, which he believed to be the Cipango of Marco Polo, abounding in gold and precious commodities. One of his first cares would be to investigate its resources and the character of its people. In there, at the foot of Silver Mountain, was the Puerto de Plata (Silver Port). On the previous voyage he had examined it carefully and found it to be a noble site for a settlement, to serve as a base of operation and supplies for the golden districts behind it. The River of Thanks would be another good situation, but there was too little water on the bar. At Monte Christi, just beyond, was an admirable harbor, but the surrounding shores were low and might not prove well fitted for residence. He had left instructions with Diego de Araña, at Navidad, to have these ports examined with the barge which he had left with the garrison for the purpose, for he was not satisfied with Navidad as a permanent situation for the town he proposed building, and, more-

over, he wished to be nearer the mines of Cibao. All this had no doubt been attended to, and the reconnoissance made of this province and those adjoining, as he had directed. He would hear his lieutenant's report, inspect the gold, drugs, and other products which had been gathered in his absence, and send them at once to Spain with such of the ships as he did not require. That done, the work of founding his colony, organizing his government, and providing for the control of the natives and the speedy extraction of the largest revenue possible would be diligently pushed. Subsequently the Viceroy would be again merged in the Admiral, and he would carry out his cherished plan of determining whether Cuba was really the eastern extremity of Asia and whether that continent was prolonged to the south.

This is no mere play of fancy. The writings of Columbus and his subsequent actions indicate beyond all question that he approached Navidad with a clear and definite programme conceived on these lines: indeed, the journal of his first voyage, in the portion written just after he left that garrison, allows us to see the tendency of his reflections; and all that followed, both in the preparations for the second voyage and in its conduct, only confirms the existence of a settled and systematic design of this nature. There was nothing blind or happy-go-lucky in his proceedings. Whatever other faults he had, this man acted on a consistent, well-digested, and comprehensive plan of campaign from the time he landed on San Salvador to the day of his return from his last voyage. Those who have the patience to follow his career will, we believe, admit as much.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In this chapter we have chiefly followed the report of Dr. Chanca, as he was attached to the Admiral's flagship and in a position to know all that occurred. We have no remains of the journal of Columbus himself before the arrival of the fleet at Samaná Bay. Here Las Casas begins his condensation of the Admiral's own record. The letter attributed to Guglielmo Coma and printed by Scillacio gives the news at second hand, and ranks with the letters of Peter Martyr, as being founded on what some participants in the voyage related to the writers.



## V.

### A BITTER DISILLUSION.

WHEN the fleet arrived at the port of Monte Christi, the Admiral came to anchor and sent a boat on shore. He considered this so desirable a harbor that, when homeward bound in January, he had examined it with particular attention; and, as it was only some eight leagues from Navidad, he expected to find some trace of Spanish occupation. He was not disappointed. The boat's crew returned with the report that on the river's bank they had come upon two corpses, one of a young and the other of an old man, bound by the arms upon two rude crosses. To the Admiral's anxious queries as to whether they were natives or Spaniards, the crew could only reply that there was no means of telling, except that around the old man's neck and feet were cords of esparto grass, such as those made in Spain. Fearful of evil, the Admiral now landed with a large party, and on that afternoon and the next day made a thorough search of the neighborhood in the hope of obtaining some further news. The natives appeared in considerable numbers and showed the utmost friendliness. They manifested no embarrassment in meeting the Spaniards, but gleefully paraded their acquisition of a few Castilian words, touching the dress of their visitors and repeating "jacket," "shirt," to indicate their proficiency in the white man's tongue. For the moment, Columbus was reassured as to the safety of his garrison, for it was evident the natives had been in long contact with his men; but his distress was renewed when some sailors, on ascending the river, found two more corpses, one



of which still bore traces of a beard. This could be no Indian, and it only remained to ascertain whether these bodies represented stragglers from the fort, slain while engaged in some forbidden foray, or whether all the force at Navidad had shared a like fate. Filled with the gloomiest forebodings, the Admiral returned on board, weighed anchor, and stood for the port of Navidad without further delay. While the fleet was under sail, a large canoe put out from land and rapidly approached the flagship, as if to inspect it. In a few moments it put about, and returned to the beach with the same speed.

It was late in the evening when the fleet made the entrance of the harbor, and, with a lively remembrance of its fatal shoals, came to anchor about a league off shore and waited for daylight before attempting to enter. Late as it was, the flagship discharged two cannon to see whether the garrison would give an answering signal, but the echoes rumbled through the night without eliciting a response. Long time the crowds of anxious voyagers which lined the bulwarks and thronged the castles of the little vessels watched for, at least, some fire or the gleam of a torch; but, save for the bright flash of the drifting fire-flies, no light appeared. The ominous silence sunk into the hearts of all. The damp night-wind drew straight from land, but brought no hail or cry; not a sound was to be heard, except the swash of the breakers on the shoals near by, or the low tones of the awe-stricken men. The blackness of the tropical night was deepest in the direction of the fortress, for there lay the forests with their double shade, which seemed pregnant with disaster and death. So passed the early watches; ear and eye were strained to catch some indication, however feeble, of the presence on shore of Araña and his fellow-pioneers. But all in vain; silence and darkness reigned unbroken. Truly a portentous welcome for the Viceroy of the Indies; a bitter disillusion for his light-hearted companions. Towards midnight, the muffled beating of paddles, drawing steadily nearer, came over the still waters, and every watcher on the ships strained his eyes to catch a sight of the approaching boat. Would it contain a Spanish crew,



or a band of naked Indians? Would its news be cause for excited *vivas*, or only deepen the deadly gloom which weighed down every soul aboard the fleet? Swiftly the dim outlines of a native canoe drew out of the darkness, heading for the caravel nearest the land. A few broken inquiries and eager rejoinders, and it swept away and steered for the flagship. As it approached, a throng of anxious faces bent over the rail and a score of questions were shouted into the darkness. No answer came, until the paddles ceased their hurried plashing and the canoe lay under the "Maria Galante's" counter. Then a single Castilian word was heard, buried in a flood of unfamiliar gutturals,— "*Almirante?*" Yes, man, the Admiral is here; catch this rope and come aboard. Again the strange sounds ending with the one Spanish word,— "*Almirante?*" The Admiral strode to the ship's side and ordered a bystander to hold a lantern, so the canoeman might see his face. No sooner did the light fall on his commanding form, than two of the Indians sprang on board and bent in profound salutations before him. The Admiral recognized in the principal one that nephew of King Guacanagari who had so innocently betrayed the golden secrets of Cibao at the time of the Spaniards' first visit. Quickly calling Diego, the interpreter, Columbus asked the visitors what news they brought of his governor, Arana, and the garrison he had left in the fort yonder. The Indians gave some evasive reply and offered the Admiral two of the golden masks he had so willingly received when he was before with them, repeating at the same time a long complimentary harangue with which Guacanagari sent to welcome the Spanish chief. Again the Admiral insisted upon knowing why his garrison had failed to answer his signals or give any signs of life, and at length the Indians explained that some of the men had died from illness, others had been killed in a fight, and the rest had gone off into the interior with the harems which they had collected from among the native villages. Guacanagari himself was no longer at the town near Navidad, where Columbus had first met him, but was some distance off, laid up with a wounded leg. He wished greatly to come in person to see the

Admiral, but his hurt would not permit; as soon as he could move he would come. There had been a great battle, these messengers affirmed, between Guacanagari and the two Kings of Maguana, Caonabo, and Mayrionex, who had invaded the former's territory. They had been beaten off finally, but not before they had burned Guacanagari's town and the fortress of Navidad, and grievously wounded that cacique. As to the safety of the Spaniards in the fortress, they would say no more than that some had been killed and others retired inland. The Admiral detained them on board for three hours, questioning and cross-questioning them in the hope of reaching some definite knowledge concerning his men. The Indians appeared to be frank and outspoken, and, despite the throng of white men who crowded to listen to the examination, they exhibited only satisfaction at being again with the white cacique; but they added nothing to their first statements as to the missing Christians. Columbus gave them the food and drink which they had liked so much when he first arrived among them, and made them liberal gifts of the trinkets they prized. When they were leaving, he sent Guacanagari a couple of pewter basins and a number of showy articles, which were sure to be highly appreciated, and bade them tell the King that the Admiral would visit him shortly. With this they entered the canoe lying alongside, and in a moment were lost in the darkness.

The Admiral and his companions on the flagship were left in perplexity, as the result of this visit. They had identified the canoe as the same which had put out from shore in the afternoon to inspect the passing fleet, and Columbus had intentionally questioned the two savages in the presence of his officers. At the same time, friendly as they seemed, no one quite believed their statements. The almost palpable gloom and quiet which hung over sea and shore were more eloquent than the ready protestations of Guacanagari's emissaries. The Admiral had more than once recited to his associates the incidents of his first arrival in these waters, — the swarms of canoes which surrounded his ships, the thousands of hospitable natives who flocked to do him honor,

the gifts of gold and other precious commodities with which he was received. They had themselves as often pictured the joy of their waiting countrymen when the stately fleet should appear in the offing, and had rehearsed the delights of dwelling amid such favored scenes after the discomforts and hardships of their long voyage. Here, however, was the stern reality. A single canoe, stealthily visiting them by night, stood for the thousand they expected; two naked savages, for the joyous crowd they hoped to see; the deathly stillness of this appalling gloom, for the noisy greetings of the pioneers of Navidad. They gathered some consolation from the repeated declarations of the two natives, to the effect that the greater part of the garrison was yet living; but an ugly report was circulated soon after the messengers departed that Diego, the interpreter, said they had told him that *all* the Spaniards at Navidad were dead. To the Admiral's apprehensions on this score was also added anxiety caused by the uprising of Caonabo and Mayrionex. He had counted on the same peace and friendliness which had so attracted him the year before, and had to encounter instead the difficulties and perplexities of a tribal war. His own expectations were as pitilessly annihilated as had been the brilliant hopes of his followers. For commander and followers alike, the long-anticipated arrival in the vaunted Hispaniola was the occasion of discouragement and misgiving.

Either because the wind did not serve, or because he deemed it more prudent to await Guacanagari's visit before landing, the Admiral did not enter the port of Navidad with the fleet until the afternoon of the next day, Thursday, November 28th. Early in the morning, however, he despatched a small force on shore to visit the fortress and examine the vicinity for traces of its former guardians. The search-party found nothing but the charred remains of the barracks and palisade, with some military cloaks and other garments scattered through the débris. There was no indication of a battle, beyond the destruction of the fort and its out-buildings. As the Spaniards were examining the ruins, a number of natives made their appearance; but,

instead of coming frankly to meet the white men, they hung back and seemed to be afraid; for whenever the Spaniards drew near they fled to the adjoining woods. Behavior so different from that which they expected caused abundant speculation among the visitors, and they sought to conciliate the Indians by throwing beads and hawk-bells towards them as evidence of pacific intention. With this, four of the natives summoned courage enough to join the Spaniards, one of the number being, as it appeared, a relative of Guacanagari. The party thereupon returned to their boat, the Indians with them, and went aboard the flagship, where the Admiral listened to their report with a heavy heart. In answer to his questions, Guacanagari's kinsman repeated much the same story as the two messengers of the night before. Caonabo and Mayrionex, he affirmed, had joined forces and come to attack Guacanagari and his Christian allies. A great fight followed, in which the assailants lost heavily as well as the defenders; but Guacanagari was routed and received an arrow wound in the calf of his leg. He was very desirous of visiting the Admiral, as soon as he heard of the latter's presence on the coast; and, if the Admiral wished, the narrator would himself go and tell the King how anxious the Spanish cacique was to meet him. To this Columbus assented, for he had begun to fear that last night's messengers must have been capsized and drowned, since no word had been received from Guacanagari during the entire day. Accordingly the four Indians were sent ashore, with the usual allowance of presents, and promised to make all speed in bearing the Admiral's messages to their master.

Friday morning, as nothing further was heard from the King, the Admiral himself went ashore with a large party and scoured the neighborhood. He had little hope now of seeing any of his unfortunate pioneers alive. Although the Indians had obstinately refused to admit the death of all the garrison, there was a vacillation and embarrassment noticeable whenever they were pressed for details of the catastrophe which, as all might see, had overtaken the little colony. Some of the Admiral's associates maintained that

the whole disaster was due to some act of savage treachery on the part of Guacanagari, and that his persistent absence was proof positive of a guilty fear. Columbus, however, refused to listen to any such theories. If Guacanagari had wished to free himself from the Christians, he had had ample opportunity, the Admiral argued, when they were shipwrecked off his harbor on Christmas Eve the year before. The recollection of the King's unbounded hospitality and generous assistance in those distressful days forbade any suspicion of a subsequent faithlessness which was certain to involve him in a terrible vengeance. Consequently the Admiral preferred to believe that the other and wilder tribes had attacked the fortress and Guacanagari's town, and destroyed both. When he reached the ruined stockade, he examined minutely all the indications which might throw any light on the nature of the calamity. The tall coarse grass of the tropics had overgrown the site, but this, on account of the rapidity with which it grew, conveyed no approximate idea of time. Here and there was a broken bow, a soiled jacket, a rough table-cloth such as soldiers might use. No other sign was discernible, and the visitors were puzzled to account for the clothing scattered about. If there had been a raid by distant tribes, how happened it that plunder so valuable in the eyes of naked savages as these mantles and cotton cloths had been left behind? If there had been a fight, where were the slain? No one could conceive of twoscore Spaniards, possessed of artillery, arquebuses, and cross-bows, and protected by stout palisades, yielding themselves alive into the hands of a horde of Indians armed with nothing better than bone-tipped arrows and wooden spears hardened at the fire. All that they saw only deepened the perplexity of the Admiral and his companions, and the singular disappearance again of all the natives lent color to the worst suspicions. The one ray of hope that remained to him was that he had so straightly enjoined Araña, Gutierrez, and Escovedo, and their men, that under no circumstances whatever were they to separate into several bands; that, come what might, they were to keep together. It was barely possible, therefore,

that they might, on hearing of the proposed attack, have abandoned the fortress as untenable and retired to some more defensible position. But another of his written injunctions, on parting from them, had been that, in the event of leaving Navidad, they were to bury in the pit dug for the purpose within the fort all the gold, spices, drugs, and other precious commodities which, in pursuance of his orders, they were to collect against his return. By investigating this *cache* something of importance or value might be discovered. The Admiral accordingly set a party to work to clear out the pit, while he took Dr. Chanca and some others of his suite alongshore in the barge to look for a place more suitable than Navidad, where he might disembark his forces, "because it was quite time that we did so," the Doctor remarks, with professional solicitude for his cooped-up charges. A few miles from the ruined fortress they found a native hamlet by the shore, the inhabitants of which fled as they saw the Spaniards approach. Entering their cabins ("the huts were so damp and covered with vegetation that I am astonished they can live at all," Dr. Chanca says), the explorers found hidden away, indoors and among the shrubbery outside, quite a store of Spanish goods, which were too valuable to have been acquired in a lifetime by legitimate barter. There were Moorish hangings in packages as yet unopened, trousers and pieces of cloth, and one of the anchors of the Admiral's lost ship, the "Santa Maria." All these, he knew, had formed part of the large deposit of Castilian goods which he had left with Arana for trading with the natives, and their presence in such a place only increased his perplexity; while those of his companions who attributed to Guacanagari's treachery, the destruction of the garrison found material enough wherewith to fortify their theories. For a moment the visitors were horrified, on opening a carefully closed basket, to find therein a human head, which they naturally feared might have belonged to one of their countrymen; but a moment's scrutiny showed that it was that of an Indian, and they learned from the Admiral that he had



found several such in different places, both in Cuba and Hispaniola, when on his first voyage.<sup>1</sup>

The Admiral returned with his party to the former site of Guacanagari's town, near the fortress, and there found that a considerable number of Indians had assembled to traffic with the Spaniards, having to all appearance laid aside their fears, and seeming anxious to show their friendliness to the white men. The latter had already secured a small quantity of gold from the natives when the Admiral arrived, and he took advantage of the newly established confidence to make another effort to reach the truth concerning his ill-fated settlement. This time he was more successful, albeit the success was a confirmation of his direst apprehensions. The Indians pointed out where eight of the luckless garrison were buried near the fortress, and the Spaniards soon after came upon three more bodies lying amidst the grass, which, from their clothes, were easily identified as belonging to Araña's force. From the appearance of these last corpses and the height of the grass over the graves, the massacre, if such it was, must have taken place a month before, more or less. After this discovery, there remained nothing for the Admiral to do but endeavor to fix the responsibility for the disaster. While he was directing a search for some written document or other record which might throw light upon this question,—for nothing had been found in the pit,—he was approached by several Indians, among whom was that brother of Guacanagari who had wished to accompany the Admiral to Spain when he was leaving Navidad. Several of these natives had acquired enough Spanish from the men of the garrison, before the annihilation of the latter, to make themselves at least partly understood, and could repeat the names of Araña and all his followers, thus indicating their

<sup>1</sup> It was cherished with such obvious pains that Chanca says, "We judged it at the time to be the head of a father or mother, or of some greatly esteemed person,"—clear proof, if any such were needed, that the observant Doctor distinguished between those fragments of humanity kept from religious motives and those kept for merely nutritive purposes, as at Guadalupe.



familiarity with the occupants of the fortress. With the aid of the interpreter, Diego, a connected recital was possible, and from this party the Admiral first heard a coherent statement of the circumstances attending the annihilation of the pioneer settlement of Europeans in the New World.

According to their account, no sooner had the "Niña" taken her departure, early in January, than disputes arose between the three lieutenants — Araña, Escovedo, and Gutierrez — and their men; the officers wishing to carry out the Admiral's instructions to explore the country, seek a better site for a town along the coast, and establish an active traffic with the natives, while the men wished only to enjoy life and secure all the gold they could for themselves. No doubt they argued that the chances were so small of Columbus ever reaching Spain, or, if he did, of his ever finding his way back to Navidad, that it was not worth their while to subject themselves to military discipline in his absence. At all events, every man traded for his own account, and each one appropriated as many of the native women as pleased his fancy. Gutierrez and Escovedo killed one of their associates in the course of a dispute, and thereupon made up a faction with nine others of the garrison who were Basques, and, abandoning the fortress, set out for the territories of King Caonabo, where the richest mines were said to be found, taking with them a bevy of Indian houris. On reaching Caonabo's country, that wily chief at once perceived his opportunity, and, after learning all he could concerning the condition of Guacanagari and his remaining Christian allies, entered into a league with his brother Mayrionex to descend upon Marien, as the territory of Guacanagari was called, overthrow its king, and clear out the nest of mysterious strangers who had miraculously appeared in their island. As an earnest of his intentions, he killed every one of the Spaniards who had entered his country. While this plot was in preparation, most of the other members of the garrison had likewise wandered off in small groups of two, three, or four, as might be, bent upon leading the lives that best pleased them among the simple and confiding people of Marien. At length Diego de Arana was

left with only five loyal companions to guard the fortress. All idea of fulfilling the Admiral's orders as to exploration and preparations for future colonization had to be abandoned as completely as had been his injunctions to respect Guacanagari and offer no affront to his people. Affairs were in this posture when the two hostile kings made their appearance. Guacanagari endeavored to defend his town and avert the attack from the fortress, but was defeated and wounded. Caonabo and Mayrionex surrounded the stockade and succeeded in firing it and the surrounding cabins by night, whereupon Araña with his little band fled towards the water, hoping to escape in the darkness, but were all either slaughtered or drowned. The invaders withdrew into their own territories, Guacanagari took refuge in one of his own villages a few leagues away, and nothing remained to remind the Haytians of the wonderful visitation of the white beings they so foolishly believed had come from the skies, except a heap of charred timbers, a lot of scattered trumpery, and the corpses of thirty or forty strangers lying among their forests and mountains.

The Admiral was inclined to accept this relation as true, but he found few among his companions of a like mind; they were equally convinced that the whole story was a fiction palmed off on the Spaniards by Guacanagari to conceal his own treachery, and pointed, as evidence, to the European wares in the possession of his tribesmen and their avoidance of the white men when the latter first landed. "They all said, with one accord," writes Chanca, "that Caonabo and Mayrionex had killed the Christians, but at the same time they added their own complaint that, of the Christians, one had three wives, another four, and so on; from which we suspected that the harm which had befallen them had its origin in jealousy." Considering that the wives thus multitudinously appropriated by the white men were the wives and daughters of the speakers, one should think that their complaints might be justifiably made without necessarily implicating the complainants in a wholesale homicide.

The next day further confirmation of the story told by the

King's brother was received. The Admiral sent Melchior Maldonado and four or five of his officers, with a caravel, along the coast in one direction to look for a desirable site for the proposed new town, while he went in person, with a second caravel, to carry on the search in an opposite quarter. As seems to have been his habit, the Admiral carried with him the surgeon of the expedition, in order to have the benefit of his judgment as to the healthfulness of the sites examined. They came upon a port which offered many advantages, but was too far from the mines of Cibao to suit the Admiral's plans; so the party returned to the anchorage at Navidad, where they found Maldonado already awaiting them with important tidings. As he coasted leisurely along-shore, a canoe containing two Indians had put out from the beach and hailed the caravel. One of the natives proved to be Guacanagari's brother, who inquired who was on board the Spanish vessel. The Spaniards replied, some of their chief men; whereupon the Indian said that Guacanagari had sent to invite them to visit him, as he was near there but could not yet leave his hammock. Melchior and the other officers accordingly landed and followed their guides to a village of some fifty cabins, where they found the King pretending, as they thought, to be invalided with his wound. He received them with much affability, and entered into a long story of the fate of the garrison at Navidad, which agreed essentially with what his brother had told the Admiral. In proof of what he alleged he showed the visitors his bandaged leg, which somewhat modified their belief that he was shamming. When they took their leave he repeated his desire to see the Admiral, and presented each of the officers with a golden ornament, in proportion to what seemed to be his respective rank. This had a mollifying influence on some of the Spaniards, although others still insisted that the King was playing a part.

Upon learning of the proximity of Guacanagari, the Admiral determined to visit him and satisfy himself concerning the attitude of his former ally. It was of the first importance to know whether he had indeed acted the part of a traitor or of a friend toward Araña's command. If

the former, no punishment would be too severe; if the latter, he might still be of invaluable assistance to the new colony. The next day, therefore, the Admiral set out for the village visited by Maldonado, taking with him Dr. Chanca in order to get a reliable report of the nature of Guacanagari's wound. He also ordered the whole fleet to weigh anchor and shift to an anchorage nearer the hamlet where the King was. As we have, of late, heard so much of the heartless brutality of Columbus's treatment of the natives, it may not be uninteresting to hear Dr. Chanca's own account of this visit which the Admiral paid to the disabled cacique, whom most of the principal officers were urging him to seize and punish for the massacre of the men of Navidad.

"When we reached the place," the surgeon writes, "it was about meal-time; so we breakfasted before going ashore. As soon as we were finished the Admiral ordered all of his captains to land with their boats. The Admiral landed at the same place with all his suite, so bravely attired that they would have made a goodly show in a capital city. He took with him some articles as presents, for he had already received quite an amount of gold, and it was right that he should show to the King the same liberality and good will. Guacanagari had also prepared an offering. When we arrived we found him stretched on a bed, of the kind they use, being a sort of cotton net suspended in the air. He did not rise, but from the bed made an attempt at bowing, as well as he knew how. He showed much grief, with tears in his eyes, for the death of the Christians, and began to speak of the affair, indicating, as well as he could, that some died of sickness, others had gone to King Caonabo to seek the gold mines, and others yet had been killed at the settlement by the natives who had come to attack them. (From the appearance of the bodies of the dead not two months had elapsed since this occurred.) At this time the King presented the Admiral with eight and a half marks of gold and five or six belts woven in stones of various colors,<sup>1</sup> with a cap of the same work, which it seems to me they hold in much esteem. In the cap was a copper ornament, which was given with much solemnity. It seems to me that they hold copper in greater esteem than gold.

<sup>1</sup> This is not the only mention in the records of Columbus's voyages of the "wampum" which the Indians of North America prized so highly.

"I and another surgeon of the fleet were present; so the Admiral said to Guacanagari that we were skilled in the ailments of mankind and he wished the King to show us his wound. The King replied that he was willing; whereupon I told him it would be needful, if he could do so, for us to go outside the house, for there were so many people present that it was rather dark and we could not see well. This he did at once, — I think rather from timidity than from readiness, — and, I supporting him, we went outside. When he was seated the other surgeon went to him and began to unwind his bandages; upon which he remarked to the Admiral that the wound had been made with *ciba*, which means a stone. After he was unbandaged we were able to feel him. It is certain that he had no more hurt in that leg than in the other, although he pretended that it pained him greatly. Altogether it was not possible to determine certainly, for the circumstances were unknown; and with equal certainty there were many things which indicated that he had been attacked by hostile people."

The Spaniards left the village and returned to their ships about equally divided as to whether Guacanagari was "playing fox" — to use their own expression — or was really the victim of his rival Caonabo's invasion. He was at least so much improved that he was able to join the Admiral and go on board the flagship, where he was regaled with the white men's delicacies and shown the horses, whereat he was mightily pleased. The Admiral took occasion to explain that he desired to build a town near Guacanagari's village, so as to be near him; to which he replied that he should be pleased, but that it was unhealthy by reason of the great dampness, — "and so it was of a surety," interjects the Doctor. Shortly after he took his leave and went ashore. Before he left, however, the Admiral hung around the King's neck a silver image of the Virgin, which he had before pressed upon him, but unsuccessfully. This incident has been interpreted as an instance of his hypocrisy, but Columbus may have been telling the truth when he wrote of it that "he learned at the village that one of the thirty-nine men whom he had left behind [the garrison at Navidad] had spoken to the Indians and to Guacanagari himself certain things in insult to and detraction of our

holy faith, and that he [the Admiral] thought it necessary to set him [the King] right in this." The effort to make it appear that Columbus was forcing upon an unwilling savage the emblem of a faith which the latter loathed for the evil works which he had so recently seen done by its professors, is perhaps crediting Guacanagari with a sensibility as forced as would have been the suggested hypocrisy of Columbus. Silver was infinitely preferred to gold by the Haytians, and Columbus knew this, as we may see in the journal of his first voyage. To him the sacred image was a talisman as potent as it was to his companion Hojeda, or to ninety-nine out of a hundred of the men with him; while to its Indian wearer it was a fetish which would preserve him in this world and the next. As such, it was to Guacanagari an inestimable treasure, to possess which he might well sink the earlier fear of "bad medicine" which the disaster at Navidad had suggested. It was merely that best of all trades,—one in which both parties were thoroughly contented.

At all events, the gentle savage monarch did not "shrink" from practising the very evils which we are asked to believe he so piously reprobated in the profligate garrison. Ten of the women rescued from the Caribs were on the flagship at the time of his visit, and among them was a tall beauty who had been christened Doña Catalina by the Spaniards. The day after he had come aboard, Guacanagari sent to ask the Admiral when he purposed leaving the anchorage. Columbus replied, the next morning. Shortly afterwards the King's brother, with several other Indians, came aboard and engaged in bartering gold for the white men's trinkets. Some conversation passed between them and the rescued women, after which the men left the ship. That night, during the first watch, the dusky belles quietly slipped over the ship's side, one after another, and made such speed for shore that, by the time their absence was discovered and chase was made after them with boats, all but four had reached land and disappeared. As soon as it was day the Admiral sent to demand the fugitives from Guacanagari, saying that otherwise he should send at once and take



them; but the Spaniards found the village deserted by every living soul. With the women, Guacanagari, the earliest protector and ally of the Europeans in the New World, disappears for a season from our ken. He is entitled to all the credit he has received as an admirable type of the race to which he belonged; but there is something grotesque in a criticism which asks us seriously to sympathize with his conscientious scruples against accepting from the hand of Columbus the badge of the Christian religion, because it permitted the wholesale abduction of women, and which then calmly proceeds to relate how, within twenty-four hours thereafter, he and his brother carried off half a score of the Spanish protégées who happened to attract their royal fancies.

The sudden flight of Guacanagari intensified the suspicions of his bad faith cherished by most of the Spaniards. Some of the royal officers, and with them Fray Boil, the Papal legate, were disposed to criticise the Admiral because he had not laid hands on the King when the latter came on shipboard; while others as vehemently took the same view as Columbus and claimed that Guacanagari had only moved from the village to some other, following the sudden impulse of the moment, as was common with these childish people. The day was spent in discussion, for the direction of the wind was such that the fleet could not with advantage continue its cruise alongshore. Finding the same weather prevailing the next morning, the Admiral ordered out all the boats, and, accompanied by the lightest caravels, started to the eastward, keeping close to the land. His object was chiefly to find a suitable location for his proposed town, for none of those thus far inspected met all his requirements; but he also proposed, if possible, to make an effort to trace the runaway King. To this end he detached Melchior Maldonado with a force of three hundred men to explore a river which they came to, while the Admiral proceeded with the remainder to examine a harbor farther on, which he thought might serve. Wherever the Spaniards landed they found the native cabins deserted, and could meet with no one from whom to learn



the cause until, as they were walking in the neighborhood of one hamlet, they came upon a solitary Indian lying upon the ground with a ghastly lance wound in the back. The man said that he had been wounded in an encounter with Caonabo's tribe, and that they had also burned down Guacanagari's village. This only served to heighten the confusion under which the Spaniards were laboring concerning this enigmatical prince, and it was not lessened by the report of Melchior, who said that he had met a band of stalwart savages who disclaimed any knowledge of Guacanagari, or connection with him, but had willingly exchanged tokens of friendship with the white men. Altogether, what with the imperfect knowledge Diego, the interpreter, had of the Haytian dialect, the still slighter skill in Spanish which the Indians near Navidad had acquired from the garrison, and the preconceptions which led the Admiral's followers to interpret gestures and half-understood phrases according to their individual bias, the mystery surrounding the destruction of the first settlement of Europeans in the western world was as far as ever from solution. "Thus, between our scanty comprehension of what they say, and the doubtful causes alleged," Dr. Chanca writes in despair, "we are all so befogged that even yet we have not been able to learn the truth concerning the death of our people."

With this reconnoissance the Admiral suspended all active efforts to learn the exact fate of his lost garrison or trace the missing King. If any of the men he had left at Navidad survived, they were hidden somewhere in the inaccessible recesses of the gloomy Cibao mountains, or were living contentedly at ease in some remote native village. As for Guacanagari, any alliance with him now would be worse than useless. Not only was his power broken, but he had shown an unmistakable reluctance to reëstablish the former intimate relations with the Spaniards. At the same time, Columbus could not bring himself to judge harshly the man to whom on that last fateful Christmas Eve he had owed his own life and that of all of his followers. He understood the native character better than

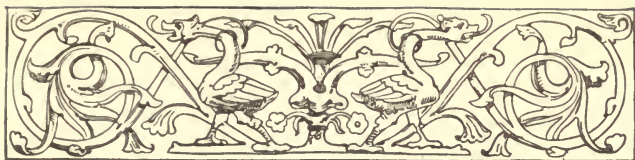
most of his companions; certainly he realized the necessities of their present position as fully as they. If he, then, allowed the King to go unharmed, it must have been because, in his deliberate judgment, it would have been unjust as well as impolitic to detain him. We have heard so much in these later days of Columbus as a "slave-driver," a "man-hunter," and so on, that it is only fair to quote his own reflections, as he entered them in his journal at the time, upon this question of punishing Guacanagari for the disaster which had befallen the settlement at Navidad. It is also no more than fair to bear in mind that, when he wrote, the Admiral was still laboring under the double disappointment of having his men sacrificed so unworthily and finding all his carefully matured plans for the collection of a much-needed revenue thwarted by their insubordination and defiance of his orders. What more sufficient justification did he need than the suspicions with which Guacanagari was surrounded and the almost unanimous opinion of the Spanish officers that the King's guilt was abundantly proved? With far less to color their acts, Pizarro and Cortez did not hesitate to dispose summarily of the native princes who fell into their hands.

"The Admiral further says in this place," writes Las Casas, transcribing from the journal of Columbus which lay before him, "that that priest, Fray Boil, and all the others, wished that he should seize Guacanagari; but he did not desire to, although, as he says, he might easily have done so. He reflected that, since the Christians were dead, the capture of the King would neither serve to bring them again to life nor send them to Paradise, if, perchance, they were not already there. He also says that it appeared to him that this King should be treated here as are sovereigns among the Christians, who have as relatives still other kings who would deem themselves offended in the imprisonment of one of their number. The sovereigns of Castile had sent him here to people the country, and had spent great sums in so doing; to seize the King would be a great obstacle set in the way of this colonization, since a war would surely follow and the native princes would not permit him to establish his town. Especially would this be a great embarrassment for the preaching of and conversion to our holy faith, which was what their

Majesties chiefly had considered in sending him hither. So that, if what Guacanagari had related were really the truth, it would be a gross wrong to seize him, and the whole country would hold the Christians in hatred and contempt. They would likewise consider the Admiral himself to be an ingrate on account of the great good which he had received at the King's hands on the first voyage, and still more because the latter had recently defended the Christians, to his own hurt, as his wounds testified. Therefore the Admiral determined first to establish his colony; if, after doing so and being firmly settled in the country, he should learn the truth to be otherwise, he might then chastise Guacanagari, should he be found guilty."

That these may be the words of sublimated hypocrisy we concede; but, had they been written by any other than Columbus, even his critics would admit them to be weighty and politic conclusions.





## VI.

### TAKING ROOT.

**I**N the ten days which had passed since the fleet anchored off Navidad, the Admiral had had ample opportunity to gain a better knowledge of the topography of Guacanagari's province, Marien, than had been possible during the hurry and anxiety of his first visit. He saw now that the country was low and unhealthy, destitute of materials suitable for building, and, notwithstanding its good harbors and abundant rivers, not well fitted for permanent occupation. He determined, therefore, to return along the coast towards the east and fix the site of his town at some one of the ports which had so attracted his attention both on his first voyage, when he was returning to Spain, and more lately when bound for Navidad. His preference was for the Puerto de Plata, near the mountain of the same name, which lay well towards the eastern end of the island, as access to the mines of Cibao would be easy from that situation, and the harbor afforded the best facilities for the establishment of a commercial city. The fleet accordingly weighed anchor and left Navidad on Saturday, December 7th, sailing along the coast in the direction of Cape Cabron. The wind was contrary, and they could get no farther that day than the islands at the mouth of Monte Christi harbor. On Sunday they doubled the mountain itself, but met with such violent headwinds that progress was wellnigh impossible. "It cost us more trouble to turn back these thirty leagues," writes Dr. Chanca, "than to come from Spain." On reaching the River of Thanks the weather was so stubbornly

unfavorable that the Admiral ordered the fleet to put about and return to a port three leagues back, whose situation and features had attracted his attention. The vessels anchored in a spacious bay, into which poured a river of considerable size. The land lay in such fashion that shipping would be sheltered from all winds save those from the northwest, and there was abundant depth of water. A native village was situated at the river's mouth, and here the Admiral landed to examine the neighborhood. He found at a short distance from the sea an admirable site for a town, at the confluence of a smaller stream with the river proper, where there was a fertile meadow surrounded by the dense primeval forest. The water proved to be wholesome and fresh; a rocky bluff, partly encircled by a bend of the stream, afforded a commanding position for a citadel; and the general level of the land was such that the waters of the river could readily be diverted for filling a moat, irrigating fields, supplying power to mills, and other like necessary purposes. The Admiral was so pleased with all he saw that he decided then and there, "in the name of the Holy Trinity," to locate his colony.

Orders were at once given to disembark both men and horses, and right joyfully were they obeyed.<sup>1</sup> Nearly three months had passed since they had left Cadiz, and the close confinement had told severely on men and beasts. Moreover, provisions had begun to run short to such an extent that the quick eye of Dr. Chanca noticed with gratification that there was abundance of excellent fish in the harbor,— "of which we have much need by reason of the scarcity of meat," he adds. A camp was pitched in the meadow, at the foot of the eminence mentioned, and there, as rapidly as they could be unloaded, the supplies and munitions were brought from the ships. All who were able were willing to bear a hand in this work, if for no other reason than that they were once more treading on solid ground and moving

<sup>1</sup> Chanca says that he landed on the 5th of January, "to sleep on shore for the first time." The general disembarkation might have occurred a day or two later; but Irving is clearly in error in holding that the first Mass was held in the church on January 6th.

as freely as they pleased. Within a few days the ships were deserted by all save a portion of their crews, and the quiet meadow on the river's bank had become a swarming settlement of tents and leafy booths.

Columbus wished that the first permanent colony founded in the new lands should bear the name of the sovereign whom he held in such especial veneration; hence he called the town which he was now establishing *Isabella*. He had discovered, to his great satisfaction, that in the immediate vicinity were good building stone, lime, clay suitable for brick-making, and abundance of timber. Therefore, as soon as he had become thoroughly familiar with the ground, and had conferred with his officers as to the best course to follow, he proceeded to lay out the town after what seems to have been a systematic and intelligent plan. On its front the site was protected by the river; on one flank a ravine prevented an easy assault by enemies; on the other and in the rear the jungle was so thick that, in the opinion of one of the settlers, "a coney could hardly squeeze through it, and so green that never in the world could it be set on fire." With the citadel built on the bluff hard by, the town would readily be defended in case of a hostile attack. Within this circuit the Admiral laid off the central plaza, so essential to all Spanish towns, from which the streets ran in designated directions. On these he assigned lots to his followers, grouping the principal men near the public square and apportioning the remoter sections of the town to those of less degree. Each man of rank or quality was directed to build his own house according to his own views; and most of them promptly intimated, on learning that they were expected to do the work themselves, that timber and palm-leaves would be preferable, from their standpoint, to stone or brick. But the Admiral ordered the public buildings to be built in a more substantial manner, of stone and mortar, beginning with the immediate construction of a warehouse for the provisions, munitions, and stores of the colony, and following with a church and hospital, and a strongly built residence for himself. While a portion of his people were engaged on these labors, he put the rest to



work at digging irrigating ditches, fortifying the bluff, erecting saw and grist mills, and planting the seeds or cuttings of the grains, vegetables, and fruits brought from Spain and the Canary Islands. In short, foreign as such effort then was to the Spanish nature, within a week the newly landed colony was deep in all the manifold occupations of founding a city in a virgin wilderness.

In the bustling activity of the first few days, amid such novel and picturesque surroundings, even the querulous held their peace for the moment. Scarcely an hour passed without the discovery of some supposedly valuable product of the forest or field, and the excited imaginations of the colonists already saw whole argosies laden for distant Spain with the precious commodities of the teeming Indies. Now it was the delicate fibres of vegetable wool with which huge thorny-trunked trees were burdened; now the great pods of whitest cotton, which bent the boughs of shrubs taller than the tallest man. In one place the trees produced a wax which rivalled the choicest yield of the hive; in another, stores of turpentine oozed from the bark, in quantity and quality superior to any the observers had ever seen. One man found what he believed to be the highly prized nutmeg; another was sure he had seen some roots of ginger; a third, that he had discovered gum tragacanth; a fourth, that mastic was plentiful; a fifth, that the true bark of cinnamon was common in the forests. It verily seemed as though, whatever else befell, the famous drugs and spices of the Orient were to be had by the shipload for the picking. Nor were the treasures confined to the vegetable world; for it was not long before confirmation was received from native sources of the stories which the Admiral had heard concerning the abundance of gold in the sierras whose rugged outlines were plainly visible from the site of Isabella. This news tended still further to raise the spirits of those who had seen in the disaster of Navidad a presage of evil for the new colony, and the prospect of gathering the coveted metal with their own hands inspired fresh courage in the breasts of those who were disposed to yield to the strange feeling of lassitude and apathy which had already begun to affect so

many. For, despite the energy which the Admiral and some of his associates put into the work of building the city, the stimulus which all received as the evidences of natural wealth were disclosed to their eager sight, and the assurances of those who were supposed to know, that the climate was more salubrious than that of Andalusia, the men were drooping by the hundred under some insidious influence. Both the Admiral and his fleet surgeon noticed this with an anxiety which they made no effort to conceal; but they hoped the evil would prove but temporary and that the change of habit and the ampler liberty of life on shore would soon restore the ailing. They had as yet acquired no experience to teach them that in those otherwise favored latitudes Nature exacts a rigid penalty for the scars men inflict upon her smiling features; that every rod of black soil the Spanish implements upturned would sooner or later claim its tenant, and each giant felled in the surrounding forest supply a headboard for some grave.

In our day the building of frontier towns and clearing of virgin wildernesses, whether in tropical or more temperate climes, has been so constantly described and illustrated that few are unfamiliar with the experiences encountered by those who undertake such enterprises. There is, however, a freshness and vividness in the description which Dr. Chanca gives of his life in those first days of the earliest city founded in our hemisphere which is free, at least, from all imputation of being a twice-told tale.

"Many Indians, both men and women, are constantly coming in here," he writes, a few days after the landing, "with their caciques, who are their captains, as it were. They are all loaded down with *ages*, which are a species of turnip, an excellent food, of which we make many kinds of dishes. It is so strengthening a food that it has brought comfort to us all; for in truth the life we led at sea has been the hardest that ever men passed through, and it was so of necessity, as we did not know what weather might overtake us or how much time God might wish to keep us on the voyage. Thus it was prudence to deny ourselves; so that, whatever should befall, we might preserve our lives.

"These Indians exchange their gold and provisions, or whatever else they bring, for lace-points, beads, needles, and pieces

of crockery or plates. They call this *age*, *hage*, and the Caribs call it *nabi*. All these people, as I have already said, go around just as they were born, except the women, who wear waistcloths made of cotton, or of grass and the leaves of trees. The holiday attire of men and women alike is to paint themselves; some black, others white and red, in so distorted a fashion that to see them is enough to make one laugh. They shave their heads in places, and in places grow long locks in a way it is impossible to describe. In a word, all that shall be done yonder in Spain on the head of a lunatic, these Indians out here will heartily thank you for.

"In this district we are in the vicinity of many mines of gold; for, according to what the natives tell us, the most distant are not more than twenty or twenty-five leagues off. Some of them, they say, are in Niti, in the dominions of Caonabo,—the same who murdered the Christians; others are in the country they call Cibao, which, if it please our Lord, we shall see and know with our own eyes before many days. We should have done this already, indeed, if there were not so many things to do that we are not enough in number to attend to them all; because within these four or five days a third of our people have fallen ill, most of them, I believe, from the toil and hardship of the voyage, added to the difference of climate, although I hope in the Lord that all will rise again in health.

"It appears to me that all these natives could be converted if we had an interpreter for them, for they do all that they see us do, in kneeling before the altars and in crossing themselves at the Ave Maria and other prayers. All of them say that they wish to be Christians, although they are in truth idolaters; for in their houses are images of many kinds. I have asked them what those were, and they answer that they are something *Turey*, which means from Heaven. I pretended to wish to throw these things in the fire, and the people were so disturbed that they were ready to cry; but in the same way they think that all we have is from Heaven, and call it all *Turey*."

The surgeon's sanguine anticipations as to the rapid recovery of his patients proved unfounded. Not only were many more daily added to the long sick-roll, but those who had first fallen ill began to die off at a distressing rate. Those who were engaged in labors calling for severe bodily exertion, such as dressing and carrying stones, working on the walls, digging drains, and the like, were the earli-

est victims; but the officials and people of the better sort were soon affected almost to the same extent, until the colony was little more than a huge hospital. The causes which conduced to this depressing result are readily enough traced. The long confinement on shipboard, scanty rations both of food and water, exposure in a new and trying climate without protection by day or night, change of diet and a continued scarcity even of such as they had, absence of proper attention and medicines when sick, and a hopelessness born of their remoteness from all familiar surroundings, were enough to break down men sustained by a firmer faith and a loftier ambition than were possessed by the luckless hidalgos, soldiers, and artisans of Isabella. A gloomy despondency seized upon the whole colony, due partly to their enfeebled condition and partly to the bitter disappointments which their exaggerated expectations had necessarily entailed. The catastrophe at Navidad had produced an ineradicable impression upon the light-minded followers of the Admiral, which had been profoundly augmented by the inevitable discovery that the vaunted treasures of the Indies were to be acquired only through the medium of sustained and laborious effort. Pursuing the one course which true wisdom and a loyal regard for the interests both of his sovereigns and his companions permitted, the Admiral adapted his resources to what seemed likely to be the requirements of his situation for such period as must elapse before he could receive assistance from Spain. He put all alike upon a stated ration, from himself down to the lowest laborer. He required that all alike should labor to place the town in a habitable and defensible condition, for he did not propose to have the disaster of Navidad repeated. It made no difference whether the objector were royal chamberlain, bureau official, tonsured priest, or fiery veteran of Moorish and Italian wars; one and all must do something for the common good and share a common portion. Such medicines as were in stock were doled out with careful hand, and the small remnant of wine still contained in Vespucci's leaky butts was set aside for the use of the invalid and feeble.

It has never been alleged, either then or since, by the

belittlers of Columbus—and their number has not decreased with time—that he established one course of life for his people and another for himself; nor is there any reason to doubt that he was entirely aware of the probable consequences of the strict regimen and discipline he felt it needful to enforce. None knew better than he, from harsh experience, the consuming pride of the Spanish nobles, the arrogance of the priesthood, or the intractability of the roving adventurers who formed so large a part of his command. But he knew equally well that to yield to their murmurings or be moved by their criticisms was to expose all who were with him to quick destruction. If he could get his stores into a place of safety, his people under shelter, and his town protected by an adequate defence, he might hope to worry through until the newly planted fields began to bear and the second squadron of caravels promised him by their Majesties should arrive. His anxieties on all these scores were sufficient, without the additional burden of bodily infirmity; but this, too, was laid upon him, and in the midst of his manifold labors he had to take to his bed with an attack of the prevalent fever. His lifelong habit of keeping the deck at night, when in strange seas or on an unfamiliar coast, had recently cost him dear in the loss of indispensable rest, and the unintermitted activity and mental stress of the busy days since he first saw the peaks of Dominica, more than two months before, proved too great a strain upon his exhausted frame. Fortunately for all, he was yet able to direct the administration of the colony's affairs, and after a short confinement regained his accustomed energy.

Next to the alarming illness of most of his people and the loss of so many, the Admiral's greatest distress arose from the utter shipwreck of all those expectations which he had built upon the garrison of Navidad. It was a crushing blow to have to report the effacement of the fort and the complete absence of any signs of treasure there; but it was almost worse to have to add that, beyond the gifts of Guacanagari and the paltry proceeds of bartering with the natives around Isabella, no gold

had been secured after two months of stay on the coasts of Hispaniola, and no definite knowledge had been gained of where it "grew." The return of an empty fleet to Spain with such scanty evidence of future wealth, and reports so vague on all points save the unhappy condition of the colony and the urgent need of further outlay, would, the Admiral knew only too well, jeopardize the whole future of the enterprise which was, to him, so much more than life itself. In choosing for his future city a situation near the province of Cibao, he had, indeed, had in view an immediate exploration of the much-extolled mines of that mountainous region, and cherished the hope that even before his unloaded ships returned to Spain he might collect a considerable quantity of gold; but the sudden and widespread sickness of his people frustrated this expectation and postponed to the indefinite future its realization. Meantime, with the exception of a few vessels which he desired to retain for his contemplated voyage in search of Terra Firma and the other requirements of the colony, there existed no cause for detaining longer in Hispaniola the fleet which he had brought out. The cost of each month's delay was in itself a heavy item;<sup>1</sup> and, moreover, he owed it both to his companions and their Majesties that news of the present condition and future prospects of the colony should be laid before the sovereigns in time for the prompt despatch of the supplies and additional men required. He therefore directed the preparations to be made for the return to Spain of twelve out of the seventeen ships, as soon as the progress of the buildings and defences should permit their withdrawal without affecting the safety of the settlement. While the necessary outfitting and overhauling were going on he determined to make a vigorous effort to obtain a reliable knowledge of the mines which were so consistently reported by the natives to lie in the province of Cibao and in Niti, the territory of Caonabo. Both of these regions were within easy reach of Isabella, and both were reputed to be fabulously rich in gold. The Admiral was still

<sup>1</sup> From the accounts preserved by Navarrete, it appears that the fixed expenses of the colony amounted to about \$75,000 per month.



firm in his conviction that Cibao was the Cipango of Marco Polo. The very name of the redoubtable Caonabo was said to mean "Golden House," and legends rivalling the later myths of El Dorado, the Gilded King, excited some feeble interest even among the disanimated colonists.

Two of the youngest commanders in the expedition were chosen for this important and perilous service. Alonso de Hojeda was ordered to take fifteen men and make a rapid march into the rugged sierras of Cibao, to the westward, while Gorvalan, a man of much the same spirit, who had won distinction in the Moorish wars, was to push south with a similar party into the still less known region of Niti. The two detachments left Isabella about the 12th of January with instructions to delay no longer than was necessary to form an intelligent opinion of the character of the country, since any prolonged stay would expose them to the danger of an attack by overwhelming forces. On the 20th of the month Hojeda returned with those of his men who had remained with him, for several had been seized with fever while on the way, and had already made their way back to the settlement. He reported, in a word, that he had reached Cibao and found gold everywhere, both in the streams and on their banks; that from more than fifty ravines and creeks he had secured gold-bearing sand; and that wherever he had gone in that province the coveted metal was so abundant that where a man chose to seek he should find it. His journey had not taken him more than fifty or sixty miles from Isabella, as his progress had been slow, at first, on account of the uninhabited nature of the country and consequent want of guidance, and, afterwards, because of the embarrassing hospitality of the natives. At a distance of some twenty-five miles from the colony he had to cross a chain of mountains, and on reaching its summit had found spread beneath his eyes the glorious Vega Real, or Royal Plain, which stretched inland from Monte Christi and had so charmed the Admiral and his companions with its extent and fertility when they had anchored in that port, both on this and the previous voyage. Descending into the vast plain, Hojeda found it dotted

with Indian settlements, the inhabitants of which received him and his escort "as if they were angels," and treated them with the frankness and liberality of brothers. Once across this inviting prairie country, the Spaniards entered the mountainous region of Cibao proper. Here the Indians vied with one another in pointing out to their visitors the riches of the soil, picking out grains of gold from the sand of the streams and scratching the surface of the adjoining soil to show that the metal, as it were, permeated the ground in every direction. Supplied with a goodly quantity of gold both fine and coarse, and with a nugget of nine ounces' weight, which he had himself picked out of a river-bed, Hojeda retraced his way to Isabella. In so doing he crossed the second time a broad river winding through the Vega, which the natives called Yaqui. It was not until a much later date that the identity of this with the Rio de Oro, emptying into the bay at Monte Christi, was established. As a matter of fact, quite unknown to himself or his command, Hojeda had penetrated into the same district where, the year before, Martin Alonzo Pinzon had obtained so much gold and so many Indian slaves before he had been overtaken and called to account by his deserted Admiral.

The news of Hojeda's success, confirmed by the exhibition of his glittering trophies, did more to rally the spirits of the disheartened colonists than anything which could have happened, short of a return to Spain. The Admiral, more than all, was gratified and encouraged, not alone because of the corroboration thus given to the accounts so constantly received from the natives as to the extraordinary plenty of gold in Cibao, but also because the Indians of that district had shown themselves to be peaceable and helpful. Under these conditions, the wisdom of his choice of a site for the new city was amply demonstrated, and he might look forward with confidence to obtaining, by methodical exertions, enough of the precious metal to reimburse their Majesties, within a short time, for all the outlays of the expedition, and establish, once for all, the value of the Indies, and particularly of this long-sought Cipango, to the Crown. His

content was still further augmented when, on the very next day, January 21st, Gorvalan returned from his expedition into the territory of Caonabo. His report was also of gold found in quantity in three or four districts, and he produced in turn his contributions to the already important stock of treasure. With this supplement to Hojeda's story, the Admiral felt that he might allay to some degree the impatience and disappointment of his sovereigns when they should learn of the failure of his and their sanguine expectations concerning the men of Navidad. He accordingly redoubled his efforts to despatch the homeward-bound fleet, and planned, as soon as it was departed, to visit in person the mines of Cibao and provide for a systematic collection of their riches, and the adequate defence of those engaged in the task. He wished, he says, to see this natural treasure-house with his own eyes, and give, to all the others who, like so many St. Thomases, should see and touch it, cause to believe in its reality. No large number of his followers, apparently, required such material demonstration, if we may accept the confidence of Dr. Chanca as representative; for the mere sight of the heavy yellow grains and nuggets had revived, at least momentarily, in the most despondent, some portion of the hopes which had beaten so high when they first came in sight of the Haytian mountains. "Their Majesties, our sovereigns," reports the surgeon, apropos of Hojeda and Gorvalan, "may assuredly from henceforth call themselves the richest and most prosperous princes of the world, for never before has any one seen or heard of such a thing; for beyond question when the ships return here on their next voyage they may carry back with them so great a quantity of gold that whoever knows of it will be astonished."

During the remaining days of the month the Admiral busied himself with the present requirements of the colony and with preparing his despatches, reports, and recommendations for his royal patrons. Looking with some anxiety at the freedom with which the natives came and went in his infant town, and realizing how exposed it would be in the event of any combined attempt to destroy it, he

devoted particular attention to the completion of the stone fortress and storehouses. In anticipation of his proposed expedition into Cibao, he set a force to work opening communication in that direction, at least for a short distance out of Isabella, where there were several streams to cross. He took some comfort from the fact that his people began to show a slight improvement in health, and he caused those who seemed least disposed to rally to be set apart for return to Spain on the fleet. From his officers and lieutenants he sought to learn all that they thought the future welfare of the colony demanded, and incorporated their views with his own in drawing up his reports to the King and Queen. He detached from his service some of those whose presence at the Court he thought would tend to a better comprehension of the situation and prospects of his colony, and encouraged all those who so desired to send home their own accounts of their experiences. So great was his confidence that the recent gloom would be followed by exultation, as the result of bringing the treasures of Cibao into active exploitation, and that the opening up of the mainland of Asia with all its vast opulence would be the early sequel of the pacific subjugation of Hispaniola, that he made no attempt either on his own or his companions' account to suppress or distort the exact truth. It was not needful to do so, in his opinion. The difficulties, distress, and disappointments of the past month or six weeks were distinctly traceable to rank disobedience of his orders and defiance of his delegated authority. Had the garrison of Navidad followed his injunctions, there would have been treasure to remit home, a mass of information collected concerning the country and its people, and relations of confidence and profit established with all the native tribes. That none of these things had been done was not due to his remissness, and he saw no reason for concealment.

The five vessels which he proposed to retain at Isabella were the "Gallega," the "Maria Galante," and three caravels,—the historic "Niña," the "San Juan," and the "Cordera." This squadron he destined partly for the defence of the colony, in the emergency of any Portuguese force unex-

pectedly appearing, partly for a means of reaching Spain, should occasion arise, and partly for the investigation he proposed making as to whether Cuba were an island or the mainland of Asia. The remaining twelve ships he put under the command of Antonio de Torres for the return voyage. On these were shipped the Carib prisoners, both men and women, and some other Indians; such quantity of gums, barks, woods, cotton, and other valuable commodities as it had been possible to gather; specimens of the native foods, — maize, *ages*, peppers, and the like; the birds and animals which offered the greatest contrast with those of Europe; and, finally, a collection of the weapons, implements, and ornaments used by the various tribes of Hispaniola and the Caribbees.<sup>1</sup> The presents of golden masks and native gold received from Guacanagari and in barter with the natives were to be sent to their Majesties by the hand of Torres himself, as was also the gold collected by Hojeda and Gorvalan.

With these ships a large number of men returned to Spain; exactly how many is not stated, but it would appear that there must have been quite 500. Among them were some of the better sort who had been invalided, and we note, with a certain amusement, that the valorous Don Melchior Maldonado had already acquired all the Indian experience he cared for and took advantage of their Majesties' permission to return to Spain by the first conveyance. Prior to the sailing of the fleet the Admiral, on January 29th, held a muster of such of his force as were able to appear for duty. To judge by what he says in his report to their Majesties, it was a sorry lot of men and beasts who faced their commander on the savannah at Isabella. The greater part of his forces was suffering in some degree from the malarial fever which was so prevalent, and even the soldiers who had enjoyed a change of air and scene with Hojeda and Gorvalan, had fallen victims to the insidious malady. Notwithstanding this, a better spirit prevailed among most of the people, due

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Chanca observed that the Indians around Isabella "possess many implements, such as hatchets and adzes, made of stone, so neat and well fashioned that it is astonishing how they could be made without iron."

in part to the fact that the fever had assumed a less violent form, and deaths from it were now comparatively rare, and in part to the renewal of ambition resulting from the brilliant expectations of gain held out by the expeditions into Cibao and Niti. Under the circumstances the Admiral felt disposed to take a hopeful view of his situation, and to look upon the crisis of his enterprise as being successfully passed.

The homeward-bound fleet got under weigh on Sunday, the 2nd of February, passing out of the harbor of Isabella and steering an easterly course for Cape Enamorado, or Cabron, as we now call it. It was the Admiral's expectation that, if ships had not already sailed from Cadiz before Torres's arrival, they would be despatched immediately thereafter; so that not later than May or June the colonists might hope to welcome new friends and receive fresh and ample supplies.







## VII.

### THE VICEROY'S FIRST REPORT.

COLUMBUS gave to Antonio de Torres, who commanded the returning fleet, a bundle of despatches which were to be delivered into their Majesties' own hands. Torres took also, with his commander's knowledge and assent, the letters written by Fray Boil, the treasurer Villacorta, and such other officials as felt themselves authorized to address the King and Queen directly. The packet with which he was charged by the Admiral contained a report of the outward voyage and the occurrences at Navidad, several lists of supplies and materials urgently required by the colony, some letters recounting "all that has been done here since our arrival, and this in very great detail and at much length," other letters of recommendation and information, a confidential account of certain insubordinate conduct on the part of Bernal de Pisa and some colonists who abetted him, and, chief of all, that "Memorial" which has furnished the Admiral's censors with so much material for their vehement denunciations. None of these documents have come down to us in their entirety except the last named. From the replies of Ferdinand and Isabella and scattered references in the pages of Navarrete, Las Casas, Bernaldez, and others, we can reconstruct the contents of the others to some extent; but the "Memorial" is the one which has reached us intact, and as such it has served as the text for a criticism of Columbus as sweeping as it is intemperate and, we believe, unjust.

It is not fair to judge a man, be he living to-day or dust for four centuries, by paraphrase and summary. It is still less reasonable to condemn him upon one clause picked out of a long document, written in the hurry and distraction of such surroundings as those which encompassed Columbus when he penned the paper to which we refer. Without inflicting upon our readers those portions which concern matters of routine, salaries to officials, discussion of details of equipment, and so on, we propose to lay before them, in the Admiral's own words, the essential parts of this first report from an American settlement. By so doing we hope to enable them to see somewhat of the workings of its author's mind, that they may be in a position to bestow censure, or withhold it, in accordance with the facts as they stand recorded. Nothing that we can write will convey so graphically the situation of Columbus and the motives which were guiding his conduct as this extremely unpolished state paper. It is dated the 30th of January, the day after the Admiral reviewed his feeble array, and begins thus: —

“That which you, Antonio de Torres, captain of the ship ‘*Maria Galante*’ and Mayor of the City of Isabella, are to say to and ask from the King and Queen, our sovereigns, on my behalf, is the following:” First of all Torres was directed to kiss the royal feet and hands and present to their Majesties the Admiral's humble duty, with such expressions of devotion as he, Torres, knew to be in consonance with his leader's life and sentiments. Then, notwithstanding the extended letters which Fray Boil, the treasurer, and the Admiral himself were forwarding by the same hands, Torres was to

“Say to their Highnesses, as from me, that it has pleased God to grant me such favor in their service that thus far neither have I found [here], nor has there been otherwise found, in any respect, anything less than what I wrote, said, and affirmed to their Majesties in the past; rather by God's grace do I believe that even much more will plainly and very quickly appear from the results. In the matter of spices, merely, on the borders of the sea, without having gone far inland, such indications and

beginnings are found as to warrant the hope of a far better conclusion. The same may be said of the mines of gold; for although only two of our men set out to explore, each one following his own path and not delaying because each had few companions, so many rivers have been discovered so abounding in gold that all those who saw and gathered it — merely with their hands, as a sample — returned so overjoyed and relate such tales of its profusion that I have some hesitation in saying and writing them to your Majesties.”

One of these explorers, Gorvalan, he adds, accompanies Torres “to tell what he saw”;<sup>1</sup> the other, Hojeda, remains with the colony, “although beyond all doubt and comparison he discovered far more, according to the note of the rivers which he brought back, in each of which he says there is more gold than can be believed.” Wherefore, the Admiral adds, their Majesties “may give thanks to God, since all their affairs are progressing thus favorably.”

“You are also to say to their Majesties,” he continues, “although it has already been written, that I greatly desired to be able to send them by this fleet a greater quantity of the gold which we expect to gather here, if most of our people who are here had not suddenly fallen ill. But this I have not been able to do, as the fleet cannot longer remain here, both because of the heavy cost it entails and because the season is favorable for it to go to Spain and for the return of the ships which are to bring us the supplies so badly needed; for if those which are to come back should defer setting sail they would not be able to reach here by May. Moreover, if I should undertake to visit the mines or rivers now with such of my people as are well, both on the ships in the harbor and in the town on shore, there would be many difficulties and even perils, for they are distant about twenty or twenty-five leagues from here, with many mountain passes and rivers to cross, and in order to provide for the long journey and for remaining there long enough to collect the gold, it would be necessary to carry a large supply of provisions. These could not be taken on our men’s backs, and there are no animals which could serve for the purpose, nor are the roads and paths adapted to such work, although a beginning has been made towards making them passable. It was also a great imped-

<sup>1</sup> Las Casas affirms, however, that Gorvalan finally did not go with Torres, and quotes a later letter of Columbus as his authority.

iment that our sick, as well as the provisions and supplies which are landed, should be left in cabins in an undefended situation, for although these Indians have shown themselves towards the explorers and each day show themselves here to be very harmless and free from evil, it nevertheless did not seem to be the part of prudence, since they daily come among us, to expose our sick people and supplies to the risk and chance of destruction. A single Indian with an ember might bring this about, by setting fire to the huts, for they are coming and going by day and night, and for this reason we have guards about the neighborhood as long as the settlement is open and defenceless.

"Furthermore," the Admiral wrote, continuing his reasons for not sending more gold to Spain at this time, "as we have seen that most of those who went exploring into the interior fell sick upon their return,—and some even had to come back while upon the road,—there was also ground for fearing that the same would befall those of our well people who should now set out. From this two dangers would arise; first, that our men should be ill there, where there is no shelter and no protection whatever from that cacique they call Caonabo,—who is, according to all accounts, a very bad man and the boldest of them all,—who, seeing us thus disabled and feeble, might be able to attempt that which he would not dare if we were sound. The same cause gives rise to the second difficulty, that of bringing here the gold which we secured; for either we should have to take little and go backward and forward each day, and thus expose ourselves to the risk of sickness, or we should have to send with it part of our force, with the same danger of loss.

"Therefore, you are to say to their Highnesses that these are the reasons why the fleet has not been detained at this time, and why no gold is sent except the samples. However, putting our faith in God, who through all and in all has guided us thus far, these people will soon recover, as they already begin to, for the climate is merely trying them with certain agues, and they quickly get about. It is evident that if they had a little fresh meat to aid their convalescence they would all very soon be afoot, with God's help, and indeed most of them would be re-established by now; notwithstanding which lack they will in good season recover. The few healthy men who are left busy themselves each day in enclosing the town and putting it and the supplies in some sort of security, which will be accomplished in a short time, since nothing is required except barricades, for the Indians are not the kind of people to attack us unless they should find us asleep, even if they should think of such a thing.

Thus they did to the others who remained here [at Navidad], by reason of their carelessness; for, however few our men were and how much soever occasion they gave the Indians to have and to do all they did, they would never have dared to attempt injuring our people if they had seen the latter to be on their guard. As soon as this work is completed we shall arrange to go to the above-mentioned rivers; either taking the road from here and seeking the best means available, or coasting by sea along the island to that place which, they say, is not more than six or seven leagues distant from the rivers. In this manner we shall be able to collect the gold in safety and place it under the protection of some fort or tower which shall be built there at once, so that it will be gathered by the time the two caravels return hither and shipped in security at the first opportunity which offers to make the voyage home.

“You are also to say to their Highnesses, as has before been said, that the cause of the sickness, so general among all here, is the change of water and air, for we observe that all are affected in turn, but few dangerously. For this reason the preservation of their health, next to God, lies in their having the food to which they were used in Spain, for neither by these men nor by those men who may arrive in the future can their Majesties be served, if they be not sound. Such provision must continue until that which has been sown and planted here shall bear seed; for example, wheat, barley, and vines, with which thus far in the present year little has been done, because we could not sooner settle down, and as soon as we did so the few laborers who were with us fell sick. Even had they remained well they had so few beasts, and those so weak and lean, that they could have helped but little. Notwithstanding, some sowing has been done, rather to test the ground, which seems to be astonishingly fertile, than because any assistance was expected therefrom for our needs. We are well assured, as the result will show, that in this country both wheat and wine will be readily produced, but we must await their yield, which, if it is equal to what the rapid growth of wheat indicates, from a very few seeds which were planted, certainly will not cause either Andalusia or Sicily to be missed here. So it is with sugar-cane, judging from the manner in which a few cuttings which were planted have grown; for beyond question the quality of the land in these islands is such, whether in the mountains, sierras, and streams, or in the plains with their copious rivers, that no other country which the sun warms can be better in appearance or more beautiful.”

The Admiral then instructs Torres as to the complaint he is to make concerning the careless work of the Seville coopers, whereby the greater part of the wine — so essential to the life of all classes of people in Southern Europe — was wasted on the voyage, and also refers to the poor quality of the salted meats furnished the fleet. He charges his messenger to see that an abundance of these articles, as well as biscuit and wheat, are provided; “for the way is long and a supply cannot every day be obtained.” “There is need,” he adds, “of sheep, or, what is better, lambs, — more ewes than rams, — and also some calves and heifers, which may come in any caravel that is sent here, and also some asses, male and female, and mares for work and breeding; for here are none of these animals which a man can use or avail himself of.” With a prudence born of long waiting upon the dilatory methods of the Court, he provides for the purchase of all these needed supplies out of the gold he forwards by Torres. The latter is to deposit it, if necessary, in pledge with some merchant of Seville and with the advances thus secured make the payments direct, “because I fear,” writes the Admiral, “that their Majesties may not be in Seville and neither their officers nor ministers be willing to make the necessary provision, without express authorization, for what it is necessary should come by the first conveyance; so that in the asking and receiving of instructions the time should pass for the sailing of those ships which should reach here in the month of May.” Mindful of the welfare of his colony, and conscious of the hardships awaiting them and the embarrassments sure to accrue to himself during the three or four months of short rations and isolation which must elapse before other vessels arrive from Spain, he reiterates that “it is desirable that everything possible be done to have the caravels return some time in the month of May, so that our people before entering upon the summer season may see and have some benefit from these things, and especially on account of their sickness. Of some of them we already have great want, such as raisins, sugar, almonds, molasses, and rice, of which a great quantity should have come, but in fact only a little



came, and that which was brought is already used and consumed, as well as most of the medicines, by reason of the large number of sick." Torres was furnished with complete lists of everything required, "as well for the sound as for the sick," and was to send out by the first ships as much as he could procure money for, sending the rest later on, as he should arrange with their Majesties.

Thus far in this famous Memorial we fail to see cause for criticism or censure. We are told, by the latest and ablest of his censors, that, upon the return of Hojeda, "there was now material to give spirit to the despatch to his sovereigns, and Columbus sat down to write it." As a matter of fact the Memorial was, as we have seen, a memorandum addressed to Torres, not to their Majesties, and was to be followed by him in making his report to them; it was only one of many documents forwarded by the Admiral to the King and Queen; it was not written until January 30th, whereas Hojeda returned on the 20th and Gorvalan on the 21st; there was no lack of material for a "spirited despatch" before their arrival, and no particular motive for extraordinary epistolary exertion thereafter; it covered all sorts and kinds of affairs, in the treatment of many of which it was anything rather than "spirited"; and of the 515 lines which it contains, as it "is printed in Navarrete's collection," to quote the brilliant censor again, just 35 are occupied with any reference, however remote, to the explorations which are alleged to have been its inspiring motive.

Columbus did dwell with sanguine enthusiasm upon the prospects of a golden revenue from the rivers and mines of Cibao, but it was because he knew this to be the matter of the most immediate moment to his royal master and mistress, as it was to himself; for he was keenly impressed with the burdensome charge of his expedition upon the coffers of the Crown and equally alive to the disappointment which was sure to result from the complete collapse of all the expectations concerning the treasures supposed to be waiting his arrival at Navidad. The future more than justified even his hopeful view of the mineral resources of Hispani-

ola, and in assuring his sovereigns of large and, as he believed, immediate returns from this, their first colony, he was performing his plain official duty. There was no lack of other witnesses than Torres and Gorvalan on the returning ships to contradict their statements should they attempt to romance, and no want of correspondence other than that of the Admiral to disprove his assertions, should they be unfounded or untrue. For the rest, so far as our feeble lights enable us to discern, the paper thus far quoted indicates that its author was a prudent and humane commander, an energetic and courageous leader, and a loyal servant to the Crown. Situated as he was, confronted by unexpected disaster at the very outset of his undertaking, forced to change abruptly all his plans in order to meet the altered conditions consequent upon the destruction of the pioneer settlement which he had founded at Navidad, and aware of the great expectations nourished in Spain concerning this returning fleet, the instructions given to Torres seem to us to be reasonable and wise. If, instead of coming from the hand of Christopher Columbus, this Memorial were the work of the chief of some colonizing and exploring expedition in the Congo Basin or East Africa, it would be read with sympathetic interest and appreciation. In what respect has this dead and gone forerunner of civilization's later heroes forfeited his title to a like consideration? The next clauses of his Memorial supply, perhaps, an answer, even if an insufficient one; for they have furnished the text for most of the angry and contemptuous strictures with which it is now becoming the fashion to atone for the four centuries of admiration lavished by a deluded humanity upon an unworthy object.

"Item. You are to say to their Highnesses," proceeded the Admiral, "that because there is here no interpreter through whom our holy faith can be made intelligible to these natives, as their Highnesses desire and as do we who are here,—and we shall labor in this as much as is possible,—by these ships are now being sent some of the Cannibals, men, women, boys, and girls, whom their Majesties can direct to be placed in charge of persons with whom they can best learn our language. They

should be exercised in matters of utility, and little by little orders be given that somewhat more care be taken with them than with other slaves, so that some of them may learn from the others, not seeing or speaking with each other until much later on, for so they will learn more quickly there than here and be better interpreters, although we shall not cease to do here what is possible as well. It is true that, as among these people those of one island have little intercourse with those of another, there is some difference of dialects, according as they may be nearer or more remote; and because, of all the islands, those of the Cannibals are very large and well peopled, it will cause here only a good impression to take some of their men and women and send them to Spain, so that once and for all they should be cured of that unnatural custom which they have of eating human flesh, and, learning the language in Spain, receive Baptism much sooner and gain the profit to their souls. Even among such of these people who have not the same customs great credit would be secured by ourselves, when they see us seizing and imprisoning those from whom they were accustomed to suffer harm, and of whom they have such fear that they are frightened by a single man. You may also assure their Highnesses that the arrival and sight of this fleet, thus assembled and imposing, in this country has given much influence to the colony and greater security for the future; for all the people of this huge island and of the others, observing the kind treatment which will be shown to the well-disposed and the punishment which will be done to the evil, will promptly reach a condition of obedience so that they may be governed as vassals of their Highnesses. Even now, wherever one of our men may be, they not only do whatever he wishes, but of their own free will endeavor to do all that they think would give us pleasure. Their Highnesses may also rest satisfied that not less in Europe, among Christian princes, the coming of this fleet will have given them a great fame for many reasons, which their Highnesses will be better able to imagine and understand than I know how to say.

“Item. You are also to say to their Highnesses that the welfare of the souls of the said Cannibals and also of the natives of this place has suggested the thought that the more who should be carried to Spain the better it would be, and thereby their Highnesses be served in the following manner: That in view of how great is the need of cattle and beasts of burden for the maintenance of the people who are to be here, and for the good of all these islands, their Highnesses can give license and authority to a sufficient number of caravels to come out here

each year and bring the said cattle and other supplies and articles for peopling the country and improving the land, and this at reasonable prices and for account of the people who should bring them. These commodities could be paid for in slaves from among these Cannibals ; a people haughty and froward, well built and of a very good understanding, who, being weaned from that inhuman habit, we believe will be better than any other slaves, and that habit they will soon lose as soon as they are away from their own country. Many of these men can be secured with the galleys which the people here know how to make, it being understood that their Highnesses should place a person of their confidence on each of the caravels which may come out, who shall prevent the caravels from making a landing at any other part of the island except here, where the lading and unlading of all the merchandise should be effected. Of these slaves also which should be brought, their Highnesses could receive their proportion in Spain.

“On this point you are to bring or send an answer, so that the needful preparations may be made with the greater assurance, if to their Highnesses it should seem well.”

Having made, quite as a matter of course, this suggestion for relieving their Majesties' depleted treasury of some part of the heavy expenses entailed by his enterprise, the Admiral recommends that in the future the caravels sent out to the Indies be chartered by the ton, after the Flemish style, rather than by the clumsy one of a monthly rental. He then announces that he has decided to purchase and retain at Isabella two of the carracks, and three of the caravels. He has been moved to do this, he adds, because “these ships will not only give authority and security to the people who have to go inland to arrange with the Indians for collecting the gold, but also in the event of any other danger which might arise from foreign nations; besides this, the caravels are necessary for discovering the mainland and the other islands which lie between here [Hispaniola] and there [Spain].” The allusion to foreigners indicates that he either still felt some apprehension lest the Portuguese might follow him into these remote seas, or that he was thinking of the great ships of the merchant princes of which he fancied his in-

interpreters had told him as he sailed along the coasts of Cuba the year before.

"Item," continues the Memorial. "You are to say to their Highnesses and entreat them on my behalf in the most humble manner possible, that they may be pleased to attend especially to that which they shall learn more minutely, from the letters and documents, affects the peace and quiet and concord of those who remain here; that for the affairs of their Majesties' service they choose such persons that they need have no fear concerning them, who will regard rather the purpose for which they are sent than their individual interests. As to this matter, since you have seen and know everything, you are to speak and say to their Majesties the truth of all things as you have understood it, and see that the course which they may direct to be taken is communicated by the first vessels, if possible, so that no scandal may occur here in a matter which so nearly concerns the good of their Majesties' service."

This plain reference to Bernal de Pisa and his fellow malcontents indicates the extent of discord which had already arisen between the Admiral and some of the Crown officials, and the serious consequences which, in his opinion, would result from its continuance. Later on we shall see the King and Queen promising to make amends for the heedlessness with which some of their appointments were made; meantime, their Viceroy surely cannot be accused of a lack either of energy or frankness in his efforts to free his government from this fruitful source of evil.

The clauses which immediately follow are devoted to the commendation of deserving officers. Torres as *alcayde*, or mayor, of Isabella was to describe its situation to their Majesties and the beauty of the surrounding country, and to ask their confirmation of the appointment bestowed upon him by the Admiral in partial recognition of faithful service. He was also to recommend to the consideration of the sovereigns Pedro Margarite, Gaspar, and Beltran, as deserving some special reward, and was particularly to say how Juan Aguado, the Queen's protégé, had "well and diligently served in all that he was ordered to do." It would have been better for the Admiral had both his com-

mendations and their subjects, so far as these men were concerned, gone to the bottom of the Atlantic. Torres was also to inform their Majesties "the task which Dr. Chanca has had with the care of so many sick and the lack of supplies, and how, notwithstanding all, he has borne himself with exemplary diligence and self-sacrifice in all that relates to his duties"; in recognition of which the Admiral suggested that the Doctor be allowed such special gratuities as were usually granted to army surgeons in active campaigning. Two other officers, Coronel and the lawyer Gil Garcia, are also mentioned with approbation and a fitting reward asked for them.

Then the Admiral reverts to the all-absorbing question of revenue.

"Item. You are to say to their Highnesses (although I have already written it in the letters) that I do not believe it will be possible to undertake any voyage of discovery this year, until this business of the golden rivers which have been found is provided for, as the advantage of their Majesties' service demands. This done, the voyage can be much better made; for it is not an affair which without my presence can be attended to by any one else to my liking or to their Majesties' benefit, however well it may be done; as all is doubtful except what a man attends to himself."

Torres is next to explain the deception practised in the exchange of horses at Seville, and lay the responsibility for the same at Soria's door. Then he is to show that more than 200 men had hidden themselves on the vessels and made the voyage without any provision for their pay or maintenance, and to ask that they be allowed to take the places of those regularly enrolled who had returned or been incapacitated. In the Admiral's opinion at least 1000 men should constitute the effective strength of the colony for the first three years; of these it would be well to have 100 mounted, but this would be expensive and could wait until the gold sent to their Majesties should provide ample means.

Following this is a suggestion which, although it comes from "the man who was so anxious to become the first slave-



driver in America," sounds strangely like the deliverances of the intelligent head of an industrial colony.

"Item. Inasmuch as the cost of this colony may be to some extent lightened by industry and the methods practised by other princes under similar conditions, more easily than it can be curtailed here, it seems well that, besides the commodities intended for general consumption and medicinal stores, the ships should bring out shoes, and hides for making them, shirts both common and fine, jackets, linen, skirts, trousers, cloths for clothing of a reasonable price, and other things, such as preserves, which are outside the usual rations and helpful for the maintenance of health. All these things will be gladly accepted by the people here on account of their wages, and if the purchases be made in Spain by faithful officers who consider only their Majesties' service, some advantage may be derived."

If Columbus proposed that slaves should work, he did not intend that his own people should stand by in idleness.

Torres is next instructed to bring to their Majesties' attention the trickeries practised by the men-at-arms, in exchanging their good arms for poor ones, and to ask that two hundred cuirasses, one hundred guns, and one hundred cross-bows, with their corresponding ammunition, be sent out. He is also charged so to adjust the salaries of some of the officers that their families should receive a part in Spain. The succeeding clause is devoted to providing for the physical comfort of the colonists.

"It would be very well," the Admiral writes, "that fifty hogsheads of molasses be procured from the island of Madeira, for it is the best and healthiest nourishment in the world and does not usually cost more than two ducats the hogshead, exclusive of the casks, and if their Highnesses order some caravel to pass by there on the outward voyage this purchase can be made, as also ten boxes of sugar, of which there is much need. This is the best season of the year — that is, between now and April — for finding it and getting it at a fair price."

A final reference to the prospects of securing a revenue follows.

"Item. You are to say to their Majesties that, although these rivers contain the quantity of gold which those who have

seen them allege, it is certain that the gold is not generated in the rivers but in the earth, and that the water coming in contact with the mines brings down the metal mingled with its sands. Although some of these rivers which have been discovered are quite large, others are so small that they are rather brooks than rivers, which do not carry more than two fingers' depth of water and can be easily traced to their fountain-head; so that it will not only be profitable for the washers to gather the gold from the sands but also for others to dig for it in the earth, where it will be more especially found in larger quantity. For this reason it will be well for their Majesties to send out some washers, from among those who work in the mines of Almaden, so that in one manner and the other the work may proceed. Meanwhile we shall not wait for them, for with the washers who are now here we hope, with God's aid, once the people are well, to obtain a handsome contribution of gold for the next caravels which shall sail."

In the succeeding paragraph the royal treasurer, Villacorta, is recommended for promotion, and Torres told to see that this be done "in such a way that Villacorta shall know by the result that what he has done for me in that which I required from him has brought him advantage." A final clause reverts to Margarite, Gaspar, and Beltran, and the other captains of caravels who remained at Isabella and who by the return of their vessels were left without stated compensation. "You are to request their Highnesses on my behalf to fix that which these men are to receive in each year or by the month, as their Majesties may see fit. Done in this city of Isabella the 30th day of January, 1494." So ends the Memorial.

At the risk of wearying our readers we have translated, as closely as the rude and involved sentences of the original permitted, all that is of interest in this historic document. It exhibits with photographic fidelity the mind of its author as he sat amid the confusion of his growing town, with disappointment and disaster behind him and a doubtful future to face. Primarily intended, as we have seen, for the guidance of Torres, it was to be left (and was so left) with Ferdinand and Isabella as a memorandum or summary of the several matters discussed at greater length in other letters

and despatches. No attempt was made to deceive the sovereigns, for no deception was possible; and no effort was made to make of it a forcible and elegant document, for it professed to be nothing but a string of isolated notes, jotted down as the subjects presented themselves to the writer's thoughts. Such as it was we have given it.

Slavery is as much of an anachronism to-day as are the wheel and the rack. Neither eloquence nor logic is longer necessary to prove the right of every human being to that liberty with which Nature endows him. We of the United States have peculiar cause to appreciate both the iniquity of the institution and the fact that a sincere belief in its justifiability is not incompatible with moral integrity. Our history is that of a people who, from their establishment on American soil, tolerated slavery as frankly as they did freedom of speech and religion. To its inherently vile methods we owe no small part of our national grandeur. When we sit in judgment, therefore, on others who thought as our own people thought until yesterday, and who had the sufficient excuse that they lived four centuries before the days of Garrison and Sumner, it behooves us to show some slight moderation. Sir Arthur Helps only states the truth when he says, in his oft-quoted passage, that "a more distinct suggestion for the establishment of a slave trade was never proposed" than that which Columbus makes to his sovereigns in this Memorial. It was meant to be distinct, for it was a deliberate suggestion submitted by their Viceroy to Ferdinand and Isabella for their royal consideration and decision. Every historian, from Las Casas to the present day, is justified in exclaiming against the iniquity of slavery as such. But in saying that, after penning the words which we have above translated, "the man who was ambitious to become the first slave driver of the New World laid down his quill praising God, as he asked his sovereigns to do," the more modern and learned critic who thus emphatically vents his righteous indignation is attempting a *tour de force*, in his anxiety to carry his readers with him, scarcely less violent than that advocated by the subject of his criticism. Columbus no more cherished such an ambition than did those God-

fearing and stalwart Puritans who, one hundred and fifty years later, so willingly converted into household slaves the unregenerate Narragansetts and Nipmucks who fell into their hands as the prize of an unequal war. We are informed that this is special pleading, that "therein rests the pitiful plea for Columbus, the originator of American slavery." As a matter of fact, Columbus was not the originator of American slavery, or of any other. He found the vicious system as flourishing in the New World as he had left it in the Old. In opening communication between the two, he provided a means for exchanging the merchandise of one for the slaves of the other, as well as beads for cotton, or hawk-bells for gold-dust. He considered the cannibals to be enemies of humanity at large, assignable to the same category as heretics, Jews, or Moors. As such they were subject to extermination or captivity, as their Christian adversaries might determine.

The whole proceeding was, to him, regular, even commendable, so far as its morality was concerned; for the captives would be proselytized and enter the Church's fold. In this respect Columbus did not rise above the accepted dogmas of his age; in others he did. He was great in so far as he led his times, but he was not little in being otherwise a part of them. To heap anathemas at this late day upon his head because, four centuries ago, he did not carry on an anti-slavery crusade as well as one against ignorance and bigotry, seems to be rather hypercritical than just.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In support of his vehement arraignment of Columbus as a slave-driver, Dr. Winsor (*Christopher Columbus*) lays particular stress upon a quotation from Benzoni. The choice is scarcely a happy one; (1st) because Benzoni did not visit the Indies until sixty years after the days of Columbus; (2d) because Benzoni, in the passage quoted, was writing of Guatemala in 1560 *circa*, and not of Hispaniola in 1493; (3d) because we have the learned critic's own authority, in another place, for saying that Benzoni "yielded not a little to credulity and picked up mere gossip," and that his discontent with the Spaniards "colored somewhat his views." It is only fair to add that Benzoni was an ardent and somewhat indiscriminating admirer of his fellow-countryman, and had no thought of criticising him in the words thus misapplied by the modern historian.



## VIII.

### THE BEGINNING OF CONQUEST.

ALL that the departure of the "Mayflower," homeward bound, was to the sturdy Puritans, the sailing of Torres and his twelve ships was to the colony at Isabella, and more. In that case there was a sustaining trust and purpose, with a confidence that in due time other communication would be had with home; in the case of the Spaniards, their leader excepted, there was little sentiment loftier than the love of adventure, while the wide Ocean Sea was as yet so little known that there was no lack of prophets to predict that those who remained behind had seen the last of their countrymen from its farther shores. To their sense of isolation was added a feeling of abandonment, and to this a haunting fear lest they should perish vilely in the obscure corner of an unknown world whither their chimerical ambitions had so rashly led them. No sooner did they realize, therefore, that they had seen the last of the vessels, from whose crowded hulls they had so eagerly escaped a month before, than some of the more influential among their number began planning to seize some of the five ships which the Admiral had retained, desert the colony, and make their way to Spain, where, as they believed, they could satisfy the King and Queen that the Italian adventurer whom they had appointed Viceroy over their loyal Castilian subjects was in reality a base deceiver and reckless fabricator of wild romances.

Situated as the colonists were, the spirit of mutiny was infectious. The Admiral's contemplated expedition into

the golden district of Cibao would furnish the opportunity; the pitiful condition of the large number of fever-stricken, labor-worn invalids who must perforce be left behind, the excuse. The plot found an able head in Bernal de Pisa, royal comptroller, whose official standing at Court was known to be such that it lent a coloring of authority to his actions even when these were obviously illegal. He was assisted by other influential malcontents, among whom the royal assayer was perhaps most helpful. This scientific expert was willing to certify, from the abundance of his knowledge, that the golden nuggets of Hojeda and Gorvalan were the inherited treasure of several generations of natives, melted down into lumps; and that when these had once been collected nothing remained for the Spaniards except the insignificant products from a laborious sifting of tiny grains from the river-beds. With this material and such other as his own craft supplied, Pisa quietly secured from many of the bitterest opponents of the Admiral and his projects a declaration or statement reflecting unsparingly upon the actions, plans, and methods of Columbus. This document, which seems to have been drawn up in proper notarial form for timely presentation to their Majesties, was hidden away on board one of the ships in the hollow of a rude buoy, such as was used for marking the position of a slipped cable. Whether by accident, or through that common treachery upon which every one else seems to count for the disclosure of a plot except those most interested in it, the Admiral, while yet busy with the preparations for his march, learned of the progress of Pisa's schemes. To seize the ringleaders and institute a formal inquiry into their guilt was the work of an hour. The comptroller, despite his rank and influence, was confined on one of the ships to await a convenient occasion for sending him to Spain. The more prominent among the followers were punished according to their quality, while the very affidavits which were prepared by Pisa to secure the Admiral's overthrow were kept by the latter to be forwarded to his sovereigns as evidence of their comptroller's disloyalty. The revolt, if such it may be called, was



crushed out with a promptness which merits sincere applause, but with a generosity toward the guilty as unwise as it was natural to the Admiral's disposition. Both those who had been detected and those who had escaped incrimination in the conspiracy united, at the first opportunity, in clamoring to their Majesties for relief from the rigor and injustice of the discipline inflicted by Columbus. No doubt he expected as much, and only withheld his hand from an unwillingness to mete out severer punishment upon Spanish nobles, being himself so constantly condemned for his foreign origin and jejune dignities. He could have been no more severely criticised, however, had he chastised the conspirators as they deserved, and an exhibition of unbending determination would have commanded at least the respect of fear. As it was, sore as were the hearts of the ringleaders and the backs of their followers, the first were still beating and latter quickly cured; and the owners of both lived long enough to more than square accounts with their too-long-suffering commander.

Impatient to start upon his journey to Cibao, and doubtful of the loyalty of many of those whose physical condition or official charges required that they should remain at Isabella, the Admiral preferred to place his trust, while absent, in the hardy seamen who manned his flagship, and thus effectually to remove all source of danger. He therefore transferred from the four other vessels to the "*Maria Galante*" their artillery, ammunition, sails, and running tackle, and left that ship as well as those he had dismantled in charge of officers on whom he could rely. This done, he set diligently about completing his arrangements for the proposed reconnoissance. The government of Isabella was left in the hands of Diego Columbus, with an advisory council consisting of Fray Boil and others in whom the Admiral yet had confidence. All the men-at-arms, whether mounted or infantry, who seemed capable of standing the campaign were ordered to make ready, and to them were joined such of the carpenters, masons, miners, and other laborers as were strong enough to work. A force of natives was employed to carry the tools and provisions, for as yet the

Spaniards had not learned to live on the food of the country. As his Memorial intimates, it was not the Admiral's intention to cut loose absolutely from Isabella as a base, since he felt the necessity of keeping within relieving distance of the town on account of the enfeebled condition of its defenders. At the same time, he wished to develop as large a knowledge as possible of the country beyond the Cibao mountains and establish at desirable points one or more fortified posts for the greater security both of those who should work the mines and of the necessary travel between these and Isabella.

Columbus set out from the town at the head of his little army on Wednesday, the 12th of March, with trumpets sounding and ensigns unfurled. The occasion was one of rejoicing for the men composing his force, but for those who remained behind invalided or detained by duty his departure only added a fresh cause of misgiving or dissatisfaction. The certainty of novelty and adventure awaiting their more fortunate companions only increased their own captious discontent, and it was with no little apprehension that their leader began his march. The column made but ten miles on that day, as neither men nor horses were in condition to bear great fatigue. As soon as they struck the forest, all attempt at martial array was abandoned, and they followed the narrow Indian trails in such disorder as they found most convenient. Camp was pitched at the foot of a steep and rugged pass, leading over the range of mountains which divided the valley where Isabella lay from the vast plain traversed by Hojeda and christened the Vega Real by Columbus. This narrow path over the pass, for a distance of a couple of bow-shots from its summit, was so abrupt that the horses could not attempt to scale it; so the Admiral called upon some of the more spirited of the well-born soldiers who surrounded him to open a way for the column. They seem gladly to have carried out his orders, despite the hard manual labor involved; for by night a feasible road had been cleared to the top of the divide. In recognition of their service,—perhaps, with a glance of irony at the affectation of their caste never to work with

their hands,—their commander named the gap “the Gentlemen’s Pass,” and as such it was known for generations. On the next morning the march was resumed, and the Admiral soon had the satisfaction of seeing spread beneath his feet the whole extent of the great savannah. As far as the eye could range stretched the emerald floor, dotted at frequent intervals with belts of woodland and watered by serpentine rivers. From the number of native villages seen near at hand, and from the columns of smoke arising in the distance, it was evidently inhabited by a considerable population. On its farther side rose the massive outlines of the rocky sierras of Cibao, the promised land of the Admiral’s dreams and hopes. Whether, as he gazed across the smiling prairies of the Vega to the purple summits of the distant mountains, he still held the belief that he was face to face with the mysterious Cipango of Marco Polo’s alluring tales, that ever-receding land of gold and precious stones which had so eluded his anxious search during the last year’s voyage, he does not tell us. Had he still held the theory, it is probable some mention should have remained. Whatever his conjectures, as he swept the landscape with his watchful glances, one salient consideration was patent to his mind: access to the boasted wealth of Cibao was easy from Isabella and the people living on the route were rather of the mild type of Guacanagari’s tribesmen than the fiery warriors of Samaná Bay.

The descent to the plain was much more gradual than the ascent of the Gentlemen’s Pass just accomplished. Light of heart and cheered by the prospect of fertile lands and accessible mines, the Spaniards debouched on the level ground with a gaiety to which they had been strangers since the echoes of their lombards rolled unanswered into the darkness of Navidad. As they approached the first native village, the Indians swarmed forth to meet them with demonstrations of joyous welcome and reverent admiration, hailing their marvellous visitors as celestial beings and pressing upon them all the contents of their scanty hoards. A like scene was enacted at each succeeding settlement, until even the most contentious sceptic in the Castilian ranks was

forced to admit that, after all, there was some truth in the stories told concerning the natives of Hispaniola by their leader and his companions of the Discovery. Progress was so easy and their surroundings so agreeable after the dark days at Isabella that the men did not count their paces. They had already marched more than fifteen miles, when, towards evening, they reached the banks of a broad stream of clear water, which the Indians called the Yaqui, but which the Admiral named the River of Rushes, from the great beds of these growing along its borders. Here he camped for the night, vastly to the delight of his men, who showed the improvement in their spirits and health by betaking themselves to the water and skylarking therein to their hearts' content. Breaking camp early on the following day, the 14th, the men crossed the river, they and their impedimenta being transported on canoes and rafts supplied by the willing natives; the horses were brought over a deep ford near by. For five miles the pleasurable experiences of the preceding day were repeated, the route lying along the Yaqui and then away from it, until the column came to a halt by the banks of a smaller but unfordable stream. Some difficulty was met with in getting across this, probably on account of the absence of boats; but the trouble was more than compensated by the discovery among the river gravel of several grains of gold. This, and the increasing nearness of the Cibao mountains, was enough, in the Admiral's opinion, to entitle the stream to be called the Golden. At a short distance beyond it the Spaniards came upon a large village, whose people seemed to be divided as to the reception to be accorded the intruders. Some of them fled incontinently towards the foot-hills, which there ran down into the plain; others took refuge in their cabins and, once inside, deemed themselves secure from all molestation if they placed a few light canes across their doorways. The soldiers were disposed to make light of this Edenic simplicity, but the Admiral forbade that any Christian should enter a hut, and thus, with the aid of signs and proffered gew-gaws, soon placated the villagers and established relations of greater confidence. Beyond this settlement the country became

broken and more wooded, and when another stream was reached during the afternoon the column halted for the night on its hither bank. The charming freshness and beauty of the stream and its surroundings led the Admiral to call it the Verdant River; and from an abundance of polished and glittering pebbles in its bed and on its banks he saw that he was approaching the metalliferous region.

Saturday, the 15th, the route lay across this stream and through a country of increasingly difficult passage. Several villages of importance were passed, and in each the natives fled to their huts and barred the open doorways with canes. Towards nightfall the column reached the base of a long and steep ascent which the Indian guides declared was the gate of Cibao, and here the wearied troops were glad to rest for the night. The distance travelled had not been great, but the roads, or rather paths, had been of the roughest, and all save the few horsemen were exhausted. Something of the novelty of their first sensations had also worn off, and the forbidding nature of the rugged district confronting them threatened a degree of toil and discomfort which was more vivid to their minds than the recollection of the grateful scenes of the past few days. On Sunday morning the Admiral sent back to Isabella a party of men with some of his native carriers and several horses in order to obtain fresh supplies of bread and wine for the troops. Another detachment attacked the pass before them and shortly had cleared a passable road for the remaining horses and the main column, which accordingly resumed the ascent of the mountain. On reaching the crest of the divide the Spaniards had the choice of two widely differing panoramas, according as they looked ahead or turned and reviewed the district they had already traversed. In the one direction was the stern and troubled confusion of barren mountains and gigantic walls of rock; in the other, the fair and seductive face of the lovely Vega Real. It is characteristic of the time and its men that they cared nothing now for the quiet charms and peaceful plenty of the broad savannahs where so lately they had revelled. Harsh as was the path ahead of them, it led into the recesses where the gold "grew," and that alone was worthy their consideration.

As the Spaniards turned their backs on the Vega and penetrated into the defiles of the sierras, they found cause to revise another of the censures so freely passed in secret against their commander and those who supported him. Not only was there evidence of gold, but of such quantity of it as seemed likely to lend confirmation to all they had ever heard of the golden treasures of the Indies they had so lately cursed. Not a creek or ravine but showed the yellow specks or spangles in bank or gravelly bed, while in many of the adjoining rocks those who laid claim to such special knowledge professed to discern indications of the precious ore. The column was now on ground familiar to Hojeda, where he had made his search for gold and gathered all he could obtain. The Indians of the district, mindful of the importance attached by their former white visitors to the yellow stuff they themselves cared so little for, hastened to meet the *Guamiquina* (the great chief) of these strangely bearded beings, and proffered him gifts of gold in dust and nugget which they had collected since they knew that their visitors cared for it. The Admiral accepted them all, readily enough, and made such return for them as satisfied the donors. Doubtless the advantage was on his side, but they did not think so; and there is every reason to believe that they acted freely and gladly at that time in pressing their offerings upon the Spanish explorers and that the latter treated them with a wise forbearance.

The expedition had gone so far into the mountains that further advance with the horses was impracticable. In front of them rose the lofty wilderness of bald summits, sheer precipices, and towering peaks composing the sierras proper, and to attempt to thread their gloomy defiles was beyond the Admiral's plans. This was a task better fitted for smaller scouting-parties, who might conduct the work of exploration more successfully than the main column, with its demands of commissariat and transportation. He was already satisfied with the mineral prospects of the district, for, in addition to the widely diffused indications of gold, he had found traces of copper and lapis-lazuli, besides amber and various aromatic trees and shrubs on the lower



hills, which, he thought, promised a yield of valuable spices. Therefore, when, in the course of the day's march, he came upon a rounded hill encircled on three sides by a swift stream of crystal waters, in whose gravelly bed the Spaniards found evidence of fine gold in plenty, he determined to call a halt and built there the fort destined to serve as the base of future operations. The river was called Janique by the natives, and was only one of a number of similar streams which flowed from the rocky gorges of the mountains beyond, so that the site was convenient alike for access to the depth of the Cibao ranges and for communication with Isabella. Here the Admiral passed four days, superintending the building of the stronghold, which was to bear the name of St. Thomas, as he had foreplanned, in standing rebuke of the sceptics who had denied the existence of gold or mines. A deep ditch was dug on the side unprotected by the river, and a tower of rough masonry erected on the summit of the hill. Around this were built the barracks and stockades of heavy beams filled in with clay. A little island at the foot of the hill, across the stream, offered a safe place for the growth of such European vegetables and grains as the garrison might choose to plant, and the whole aspect of the spot was one of healthful quiet and security.<sup>1</sup> The Spaniards drew varying auguries from an incident attending the digging of the ditch. At the depth of a fathom or more beneath the surface, the laborers came upon some fossilized birds' nests, with three or four eggs converted into stone. Great was the wonder excited by this unusual spectacle, and the more sanguine among the spectators argued that the petrifications were proof positive of the mineral character of the soil of Cibao.

In the meantime, two cavaliers, Lujan and Gaspar, were sent farther into the mountains, with a scouting party. They

<sup>1</sup> Las Casas inherited from his father, who was with Columbus on this exploration, a small estate which included this fort and its vicinity. He expatiates with naïve delight upon its beauties, and says that even at the time of his own residence there, thirty years afterwards, the little island produced "the best onions in all this Hispaniola," grown from the seeds planted by the garrison of the Admiral's fort.

returned in a few days with a report extolling the wealth of the district, and declaring that in many parts it was even as fertile as the lower country. Work upon the fort progressed so well that by Friday, the 21st of March, the Admiral felt justified in commencing his homeward journey, for the condition of the colonists of Isabella was a source of constant anxiety to him. He left Pedro Margarite at Fort St. Thomas, as commander and deputy, with fifty-two good men, giving him ample instructions as to his method of procedure both towards the natives and with regard to the prosecution of the mining, or rather washing, operations. Shortly after setting out upon their return, the main column encountered the train of horses and Indian carriers which had been sent to the town the week before for additional supplies, and these the Admiral ordered to continue on to the fort and there discharge their burdens. He and his own force experienced much difficulty on this march, owing to the rivers being greatly swollen by heavy rains in the sierra. They were detained so long that they were forced to buy from the villages through which they passed such native food as the Indians had to offer, and it was not until the 29th of the month that they reached Isabella. Throughout the return, as on the advance, they had met with nothing but confidence and hospitality from the natives, and this the Admiral had requited in kind by forbidding any excess or offence, and scrupulously paying in beads and other trinkets for all that was supplied or given to his men.

The seventeen days which had elapsed since the departure of the expedition for Cibao had passed far less cheerfully in the town than with the absentees. The sickness continued to spread among the people, and was aggravated by the short rations and enforced labor. There was, indeed, an intimate connection between the two causes which should have been sufficient for reasonable men; but the fever-stricken and discontented crowd which remained at Isabella, was in no frame of mind to listen to anything but the recital of its own grievances. The small stock of biscuit which was landed unspoiled from the ships had

soon been exhausted, and there was left nothing but the supply of wheat in grain. To grind this into flour, a mill was necessary, and no suitable site for it was found nearer than a league up the river. This involved an amount of labor beyond the forces of the few ditchers and artisans among the colonists, and when they succumbed to the climate,—as they were sure to do at such work,—either the “gentlemen” of the colony had to be called on to help or all hands would have to go hungry. In face of this dilemma, Columbus did not hesitate to order the work to be done by the arms available; whether they were covered by black mantles or leathern jerkins was a matter of little importance. Unlike their ambitious peers of the Gentlemen’s Pass, the ditch-digging hidalgos of the town looked upon their unfamiliar duty as an indignity, and as soon as the Admiral’s back was turned, took counsel with other malcontents among the officials. Finding a congenial spirit in Fray Boil, they resolved to lay a representation of their unhappy condition before the Crown and demand the retirement of the foreign upstart who thus abused his authority as Viceroy to humiliate and sacrifice Spanish noblemen. Such was the posture of affairs which Diego Columbus had to report to his brother, upon the latter’s return from his successful expedition to the mines. There was nothing to do but to repeat his action in the more serious case of Bernal de Pisa, punishing the leaders in the dissatisfaction and warning their followers. If this had the momentary effect of repressing the open evidences of sedition, it only increased the hidden irritation, and there were many now ready to join any scheme which should be proposed for abandoning the Genoese Admiral, and betaking them to Spain to lay their complaints before the King and Queen. Incidentally, by so doing, they might obtain a larger share in the emoluments likely to flow from these self-same Indies; for they were only a “delusion” when administered by Columbus, his brother and their coterie.

The Admiral’s position was sufficiently harassing from the discovery of this new outbreak of discontent; but it

was rendered absolutely precarious by a new danger which arose most unexpectedly in another quarter. Scarcely a week had passed after his return to Isabella, when messengers arrived from Margarite, announcing that the Indians were abandoning their villages in masses and withdrawing into the mountains of Cibao, whence the redoubtable Caonabo had sent word to the Spaniards, that he should shortly issue forth with an overwhelming force and sweep Fort St. Thomas and its garrison from the earth as completely as he had the ill-fated Navidad. This was in such complete contrast with all that Columbus had seen of the attitude of the natives while on his expedition, and all that he had learned concerning Caonabo, that the effect was well-nigh disheartening. Any hesitation might and probably would involve Margarite and his force in destruction, and, at the same time, any half measures would be merely sowing the seeds of future embarrassment. The Admiral accordingly consulted with those of his adjutants in whom he had faith, and soon settled upon a course of action intended to deal radically with the present danger, and provide against its recurrence. The plan contemplated tallies so closely with the character of Hojeda, and that impetuous youth played so prominent a part in its execution, that we are disposed to attribute to him the suggestion of its main feature, which was, in plain English, the kidnapping of Caonabo. We hasten to add that we have no idea of shifting any responsibility from the Admiral's shoulders in saying this: the measure was too consonant with the spirit of the times to admit any doubt as to his probable willingness to originate it; but we think the sequel gives color to a belief that Hojeda was the author of the scheme, which undoubtedly received the hearty approval of his leader.

Orders were issued for all the healthy men to prepare at once for a prolonged campaign, and for the horsemen to make part of the force. Such provisions as the storehouses afforded were hastily packed for carriage by native porters, and to these were added the arms likely to be needed by the military portion of the force at St. Thomas. When

the arrangements were completed, and the detachment ready to march, every available man in Isabella was in the ranks, leaving the colony to be cared for and defended by the convalescents, artisans and mechanics, with the officials and priests to help them. Hojeda was put in command of the relieving column, which mustered 396 strong; 16 horsemen, 250 lance and cross-bow men, 110 arquebusiers and twenty officers. Among the latter were those most trusted by the Admiral, so that in stripping the town of its defenders, and himself of his faithful adherents, he was giving the best evidence of the importance he attached to the movement. Hojeda bore a detailed letter of instructions to Margarite, and was himself given certain verbal orders. He was to follow a different road from that taken by the first expedition, in order to avoid some of the obstacles met with at that time. His directions were of the strictest in relation to the considerate treatment of the Indians of the Vega Real and elsewhere. On arriving at St. Thomas, he was to turn over the command of the larger column to Margarite, who was to continue the advance into Cibao in search of Caonabo, Hojeda remaining meanwhile as commandant of the fort, with the original garrison of fifty-two, and a reinforcement of seventy more from the relieving force. The assignment of this relatively pacific duty to the young captain may, perhaps, be interpreted as indicating some doubt in the Admiral's mind as to his fitness for the diplomatic task of securing possession of the redoubted cacique without rousing the native population to a war of reprisal.

Hojeda left Isabella with his command on the 9th of April. The letter of instructions which he was to deliver to Don Pedro Margarite was full and explicit, and was dated on the same day. It thus apparently includes the final deliberations of the Admiral in the matter of his policy towards the natives, whether these belonged to the peaceable tribes, like those of the Vega, or were warriors, like those under the leadership of Caonabo and Mayrionex. As it was written under the influence of a sudden surprise and an apprehended collision with the mountaineers of Cibao,

and was issued specifically under the absolute authority vested in Columbus as Viceroy and perpetual Governor of the Indies for the King and Queen, without fear of censure or criticism, it may safely be assumed to be the natural and genuine expression of his sentiments and intentions at that time with regard to the native population. From this point of view the document possesses a peculiar interest for those who care to form their own estimate of its author's character.

Upon the arrival of Hojeda's column at Fort St. Thomas, it recites, Margarite is to divide it into as many separate battalions, preferably three, as he judges best for the service contemplated (for he was reputed a gallant and skilful general), appointing to the command of each the captain he may select. The Admiral declares, that, although what he writes is based upon such experience as has thus far been gathered in the several expeditions sent out from Isabella, he leaves to Margarite full liberty to add to, or take from, the instructions which follow anything which, in his opinion, the special circumstances of the time or place may demand, "for the principal object in view is that you march with all the people here enumerated throughout this whole island, reconnoitering its provinces, people, districts, and productions, and particularly the whole province of Cibao." In executing this programme, the Admiral adds, Margarite may rely upon being supported with all that he needs from Isabella as a base. "The chief thing which you have to do," proceeds the letter, "is to protect carefully the Indians, that no harm or wrong be done them, and nothing taken from them against their will; rather let them be shown respect, and be so satisfied that they will not have cause for anger." In somewhat violent contrast to this recommendation, he directs that if any Indian should steal from the Spaniards he is to have nose and ears cut off, "for these are members which cannot be concealed," and thus the natives will soon learn, that "it was for the theft committed, and that the good will be very kindly treated, but the evil will be punished." The proposed chastisement has, of course, given occasion for a chorus of vehement outbursts from his



censors against the rank cruelty of Columbus; but they forget that he was merely applying the accepted punishment of his day for the offence specified, and that the statute books of both Europe and America imposed the same or a worse penalty for theft for centuries after his fingers were dust. The Admiral based his order upon the tendency to pilfer, which he had observed both in his first voyage and on this recent march to Cibao. Whether it was policy or not to treat the Indians, to whom the appropriation of what they liked was no crime, as though they were thieving Spanish peasants, is a matter of opinion; but it is idle to claim that any cruelty was intended or sanctioned in visiting upon the savages a retribution not deemed excessive for European offenders.

The scantiness of Spanish rations available would compel Margarite to depend to a great extent upon the natives for subsistence; and, accordingly, minute instructions are given as to his treatment of the Indians in procuring supplies. Two minor officials are intrusted with a sufficient quantity of beads, hawk-bells, and other trinkets to be used in exchange for provisions, and are strictly enjoined "to pay in these articles for all the bread and other victuals which it may be needful to buy," keeping a detailed account of the time, place, and character of every transaction, and conducting each in the presence of a deputy of the Comptroller. To insure the execution of this order, Margarite is told to detach twenty-five men and place them under the command of Luis de Arriaga, who shall act in the double capacity of guard and overseer for the commissaries appointed, "so that there may be no excuse for any one, of whatever rank or condition he may be, to take anything from the Indians and thus cause them two thousand vexations. This is something," pursues the Admiral, with an evident appreciation of the danger of unrestricted intercourse between his followers and the confiding natives, "which is especially contrary to the wishes and service of the King and Queen, our sovereigns. Their Majesties desire more the salvation of these people, and that they may become Christians, than all the treasures that can issue from this country. Therefore ample

provision is made so that every one may be satisfied, since their Majesties have ordered that they should all be paid for food and such other things as may be necessary to you. If by chance you should not obtain enough food by purchase, you are to take measures to secure it otherwise, taking it in the most honest manner practicable and coaxing the Indians." The latter advice resembles somewhat that attributed to the Quaker parent; but its motive is clearly to prevent injustice to the natives.

Having taken what precautions he deemed sufficient to ensure the maintenance of pacific relations with the Indian population in general, Columbus now proceeds to unfold his scheme for securing the person of that chief, who, he considered, represented the element hostile to the Spanish occupation of Hispaniola. It is hardly necessary, with the experience of four centuries of contact between European and aborigine to guide us, to dwell upon the futility of his calculations; nor is it profitable to hurl objurgations at the long-dead discoverer for the moral obtuseness which sanctioned such a plan. In proposing it, the Admiral and his advisers were following a custom not only permitted but applauded in the wars with which they were most familiar, and to Columbus the act was more than justifiable; it was obligatory in view of the massacre by Caonabo of the Navidad garrison. With this stroke the Admiral hoped to remove the main danger of a native revolt, and send to Spain the most famous warrior of the Indies as an earnest to their Majesties of the successful establishment of the Spanish power. There is a frankness about the whole proposition which would be cynical were it not for its transparent simplicity.

"In this affair of Caonabo," the Admiral writes to Margarite, "I greatly desire that such a course should be diligently pursued that we may be enabled to have him in our power, and to accomplish this you should proceed in the following manner, in my opinion: send some one, with ten very discreet men, who shall take a present of certain things which are being taken to you by those who carry the articles for traffic. Let these men flatter him, and show him that I have a great longing for his

friendship and will send him other gifts, and that he should send us some gold. Let them impress upon him how it is that you are there and that you are marching through the country at pleasure with many people; that we have men beyond number and each day many more are coming, and that I will send him constantly some of the articles they are bringing from Castile. Let him be treated with this kind of speech until you have established friendship with him, so that he may be the more quickly taken. You should not attempt just now to go to Caonabo with the whole force, but send Contreras. He can take the ten soldiers, and they can return with the reply wherever you may be. As soon as this party has been received, you can send another and yet another, until the said Caonabo is satisfied and without suspicion that you intend doing him harm, when you can decide upon the method of capturing him as to you may seem best and according to what Contreras shall have told him. In this let Contreras do only what you shall have said and not exceed it.

“The method to be pursued in seizing Caonabo, subject to what may be discovered at the time, is this: Contreras is to labor diligently with him and arrange that Caonabo goes to talk with you, so that you may the more securely accomplish his seizure. As he is accustomed to go naked, it would be difficult to hold him, and if once he should escape and flee it would not be possible to get him again in your hands, owing to the nature of the country; therefore, when he is before you, give him a shirt and have him dress himself at once, let him have also a long gown and girdle it with a belt, and put a hood upon his head. Having done this you may secure him and he cannot escape. You ought likewise to seize his relatives who may be with him. If for any reason Caonabo himself should be indisposed, so that he cannot go to visit you, so manage with him that he will accept in good part your going to him. Before you reach him Contreras ought to precede you to assure him, saying to him that you are visiting him for the purpose of seeing and knowing him and establishing friendly relations; for upon your appearing with a large force he might become apprehensive and start to escape to the mountains, and you would miss the quarry. All this, however, is referred to your discretion, for you to do as you think best.”

Such was the elaborate stratagem planned to secure this one savage leader. We have given it to our readers at full length, because it illustrates so graphically that side of the

character of Columbus which has been persistently attacked as contemptible and mean. Tried by the standard of morals which we preach, it admits of no defence, for it is a network of deceit and falsehood. Compared with the code of ethics which we ourselves have so consistently practised in our relations with the red man, an experienced observer would doubtless pronounce Columbus to be almost too thoughtful of his adversary to make a successful Indian fighter.

The remaining instructions to Margarite relate to matters of discipline. He is to see that justice is respected and that all who disobey his orders are severely chastised, otherwise the errors of Arana's force might be repeated; the men would scatter, lose their sense of duty, and commit excesses, and thus be exposed to retaliation by the natives who would not hesitate to murder stragglers, although they were too cowardly to attack the larger parties. "Let me remind you," writes the Admiral, "that there are no people so evil as cowards, who never give quarter to any one; so that if these Indians find one or two men straggling it would not be surprising if they killed them." Margarite is further ordered to open roads and paths on whatever journeys he should make, erecting crosses at convenient points and cutting them and the names of their Catholic Majesties on the largest trees in signal of possession. He is also to undertake a reconnoissance into the country beyond Cibao which the natives called Yamahuix, and determine its nature, as well as the extent of Cibao. But, since Gaspar's scout established the nearly impassable character of those regions, Margarite is cautioned to leave his horses behind at Fort St. Thomas in care of a skilful trooper who will keep them in condition. The document closes by conferring upon Margarite "the same power which I hold from their Majesties as Viceroy and Captain General of these Indies," and charges all who are under his command to obey his instructions as fully and under the same penalties for disobedience as though the author were present in person. It is signed with the signature generally used by Columbus after the Discovery, — "The Admiral."

Hojeda left Isabella with his column on the same day, April 9th. His progress to and through the Vega Real was marked by no incident more serious than meeting with three Spaniards coming from Fort St. Thomas, who complained that, in fording the Golden River, the Indians who were carrying their arms and clothes had abandoned the white men and gone back to their own village with the plunder, which they had delivered over to their cacique. The latter, instead of punishing them, coolly appropriated the clothing for his own adornment. On learning who this chief was, Hojeda vowed to take vengeance upon him for the theft, and as soon as he reached the village incontinently seized both the cacique and his nephew and sent them back to Isabella in chains. Not content with this, he caused one of the guilty Indians to be brought into the public square or meeting ground of the settlement, and there cut off his ears as a warning to his tribe, after which he resumed his march. When the two captives, with their guard, passed the villages adjoining their own, the sight of their chains and their tale of injustice so moved the other natives, that another cacique volunteered to accompany them to the white men's town and plead their cause with the great Guamiquina himself; confident that, when the Admiral should know that these prisoners were among those chiefs who had shown the most friendliness and hospitality both to himself while on the way to Cibao and to Hojeda on his first expedition, he would instantly order them released. In due time the party reached Isabella, and the case was laid before Columbus. He chose rather to believe Hojeda's report concerning it than the statements of the prisoners and their loyal neighbor, and, in order to impress them with an exhibition both of his authority and clemency, sentenced the captive cacique and his nephew to death. They were accordingly led out to the plaza and announcement made that they were to be decapitated, whereat their fellow-cacique implored the Admiral, with tears and sobs, to spare their lives, assuring him, as well as he could by signs and words, that never again should the offence be repeated. After a sufficient show of harshness,

the Admiral consented to pardon them and ordered their release, vastly to the joy of their disinterested advocate. So far no harm had been done. The *coup de théâtre* planned by Columbus seems scarcely worth while in our present lights; but it may have had its value under the circumstances. The same trick has been played since with good results. But before the captive cacique's people had an opportunity to learn the clemency shown their chief, they had taken the law in their own hands by surrounding a squad of five Spaniards, who passed through their village after Hojeda's departure, and threatening them with death in retaliation for the anticipated loss of their cacique. Just as the unfortunate Castilians had concluded that their last hour had sounded, one of the mounted men-at-arms from Hojeda's column came into the same village. Seeing his comrades surrounded by a crowd of several hundred angry natives, he promptly laid his lance in rest and spurred his horse into the naked throng. The effect was instantaneous, for most of the Indians still considered the horseman to be some kind of composite demon: in a moment the five Spaniards were free men and their captors had fled to the woods. The soldiers reached Isabella safely, just after the Admiral had released his two condemned prisoners, and related their story. It did not affect his determination, but it gave him food for reflection, for he saw more clearly than ever the danger of disaster from the unjust and despotic conduct of his followers in their dealings with the natives. He relied on the sincerity of his own intentions towards them, and the efficacy of his explicit instructions to Margarite to prevent a recurrence of such a disturbing incident as that just closed; but in this he was grievously in error, as we all know from the sequel. Nevertheless, as the days passed without further signs of discontent, and messengers came and went freely between Isabella and St. Thomas, he persuaded himself that the trouble at the Golden River was only a flash in the pan, and that, with Margarite in the field with 400 men, all risk of serious trouble was over.



He had laid down, in writing and by his actions, on clearly defined lines, the policy to be pursued by his people in their relations with the Indian population, and in the conviction that it would be loyally carried out, he anticipated no further ground for anxiety on this score.





## IX.

### IDENTIFYING ASIA.

WITH the organization of the expedition sent to Margarite the Admiral felt that he had provided, so far as his present resources allowed, both for the development of the Cibao gold workings and the systematic exploration of the island. The prompt measures adopted for repressing the mutinous tendency of the discontented faction in the colony had, he believed, removed all danger of open revolt, although he realized and discounted in all his plans the existence of a wide-spread spirit of dissatisfaction with himself and his methods. Since there was no prospect of an early arrival of vessels from Spain, and he had so recently sent thither a full statement of his proceedings, and the needs of the colony, he conceived that no opportunity would be more fitting for him to execute their Majesties' earnest and repeated injunctions to complete at the earliest practicable moment his exploration of Cuba, and determine whether it was merely a great island, as the Indians had told him at the time of the Discovery, or the eastern extension of the Asiatic continent, as he was himself disposed to argue. In reaching this decision, there is little doubt that he was influenced by his natural bias in favor of the sea and the investigation of its mysteries. He thought that the question concerning Cuba could be settled in a month or two at the most, and he should then be free to pursue his plans of discovery towards the South in the near future. It is, perhaps, worth while to bear in mind these motives, for they furnish a sufficient answer to the accusations of sordid avarice and selfish ambi-

tion so freely brought against Columbus by his censors. If he were greedy of gold, why should he turn his back on the proven wealth of the gravels and rocks of Cibao? If he were covetous of power and official rank, why should he abandon the post of Viceroy, and subject himself to the certain hardships and doubtful rewards of another voyage of discovery? There was no lack of competent and spirited navigators and adventurers in his following; why not send these to explore the Cuban coasts? The result of their discoveries would redound to his glory, and the government of the lands they might find would fall within his jurisdiction, whether he or another were the discoverer. If the famous provinces of Mangi and Cathay were shown to lie among the Cuban mountains, as he had believed when coasting that island the year before, he could do no more than ascertain the fact with the force he proposed to take, and this could be as well done by a deputy. Look at the matter as we may, the record means nothing, if it does not prove that, in leaving Isabella at the time and in the manner he did, Columbus sunk the Viceroy in the Admiral, and subordinated every other sentiment to his persistent determination to solve the enigmas of the Ocean Sea. He was sailor and explorer in every fibre of his being; and, having done all he deemed necessary to develop and protect the interests of the Crown in Hispaniola, his thoughts turned to blue water and unvisited shores as naturally as do those of certain of his critics to the degraded qualities which he did not possess and the crimes of which he was not guilty.

His preparations were soon and simply made. The government of the island was committed to a Council composed of Diego Columbus as President, and Fray Boil, Pedro Alonzo Coronel, Alonzo Sanchez de Carvajal, and Juan de Lujan, as members. These were to receive all his delegated powers, while Pedro Margarite was to be commander-in-chief of the military forces, and the Viceroy's lieutenant *in partibus*. His selection of councillors and deputies, with the one exception of his brother, was guided by an honest desire to consult the preferences of his sovereigns, for all the others were men who stood high in the

esteem of Ferdinand and Isabella, and they were not all friendly to the Admiral. Fray Boil, Columbus knew, was opposed to him, for he had espoused the cause of Bernal de Pisa, and openly disputed the Admiral's right to make Castilian hidalgos work like common laborers, and tonsured priests live on short rations like ordinary laymen. If he had been seeking only his own welfare and aggrandizement, his choice would have been otherwise ; in making it as he did he displayed both policy and moderation. Unfortunately, we have no copy preserved of the instructions left with the Council, and are dependent upon occasional references for our knowledge of its proceedings during his absence. He left with the colony the two large and well-armed carracks, fitting out only the three small caravels as better suited for his own purposes. On these he took no soldiers, but chose their pilots, officers, and crews with a view only to their proficiency as seamen. The names of all the men have come down to us, and they represent nearly every seaport in Spain, and a few in Portugal and Italy. The Admiral was going on no summer cruise, and he wanted none but sailormen on board his craft. The little fleet was scantily provisioned, for the colonial stores were at the lowest ebb. As interpreter he took the sole survivor of the natives of Guanahani who had returned to Spain with him from the Discovery. This young Indian had been baptized by the name of the Admiral's brother, Diego Colon, and was proficient in Spanish as well as in some of the dialects of Cuba and the Bahamas. The Admiral selected his favorite "Niña" as his flagship, with Juan de la Cosa and Francisco Niño as his chief pilots. A priest and the customary crown officials— notary, inspector, and comptroller—accompanied the squadron, together with three or four body-servants of his own.

The caravels weighed anchor and sailed out of the harbor of Isabella at midday on Thursday, the 24th of April, barely a fortnight after the departure of Hojeda and his column to join Margarite. As was his habit, the Admiral began his voyage "in the name of the Holy Trinity," a pious formality from which he derived much consolation. Taking a westerly course, he anchored for the night in the harbor of

Monte Christi, and proceeded the next day to the old anchorage at Navidad. He hoped, by touching here, to find that Guacanagari had returned from his hasty flight, and to have a conference with him ; but although the natives came freely alongside the caravels in their canoes, and repeated the familiar story about their king having gone on only a short journey and intending soon to return, Guacanagari failed to appear. After waiting a day, the squadron sailed to the island of Tortugas, where it was becalmed over night, and forced on the following day by winds and a high sea to take refuge in the mouth of the river called by the Admiral on his first voyage the Guadalquivir. At last, on Tuesday, the 29th, Port St. Nicholas, at the western end of Hayti, was reached, and from here the outlines of the easternmost cape of Cuba, that Alpha and Omega of the Admiral's former voyage, were faintly discernible. Was it, in truth, the beginning and the end of the mighty continent of Asia, or merely a rocky headland jutting out from a lordly island, distinguished from Hispaniola, Guadalupe, and Dominica only by its vaster size? This was the problem which he had come to solve, and in its solution he would gladly adventure every ambition and hope of advantage that he nourished.

Leaving Cape St. Nicholas, adjoining the port of that name, the caravels traversed the fifty or sixty miles which separate the two great islands, and approached the coast of Cuba near the point from which he had sailed for Hayti the year before. At that time the Admiral had, it will be remembered, reached Point Maysi from the northern side of the island, and noted, on arriving there, that the coast line doubled abruptly toward the west and southwest, in which directions it appeared to continue indefinitely. On the present voyage his interest lay wholly on the southern side of the island, for it was to follow this coast in its westward trend that he had come. If, sooner or later, it turned again toward the north, he should have discovered one more island. If, on the contrary, it were to lead him further and further south, he should, in his opinion, have reached the shores of Asia itself, and have before him its

teeming wealth and countless myriads of people, the goal of all his long years of effort and sacrifice.

Hugging close the coast line, the fleet sailed due west for sixty or seventy miles without observing anything more interesting than the luxuriant forests of the littoral and the magnificent mountain ranges of the interior. At about this distance from the eastern end of the island a harbor was found whose narrow entrance belied its proportions, for it ran far into the land. The squadron came to anchor here, and was soon surrounded with native canoes whose occupants brought fish and conies to barter with the Spaniards. The fame of these astonishing white visitors had evidently crossed the island from the northern shores, or else been communicated from Hayti, for these Indians exhibited a friendliness and freedom from all fear which showed that they had learned something of the favorable side of their visitors' character. The vessels remained in this bay until Sunday, the 1st of May, and the Admiral exerted himself to learn more of Cuba and its people, but added little to his knowledge. Weighing anchor he continued along the coast, which now became more irregular, being indented with bays and the mouths of considerable streams. The great sierras came somewhat nearer to the sea, and the rank luxuriance of the forest growth bore witness to the soil's abounding fertility. From almost every inlet and point the natives put out in their canoes and paddled out to the caravels, bent on holding intercourse and traffic with the strangers. It was a repetition of the Admiral's experience on his first voyage, and the same expressions of joyful welcome and admiration rung from the thronging Cubans as they came near the ships. To them, as to their brethren of the northern shore, the Bahamas, and Hayti, these bearded newcomers were heavenly visitants, — no doubt they had been so described by the other natives who had brought the news of their arrival a year ago, — and, therefore, all the Indians had been placed freely at the white men's disposal. In due time they were requited for their hospitality in the approved Castilian style, being exterminated with a thoroughness which left nothing to be desired. For the present, how-



ever, the Spaniards acted with justice and liberality, for the Admiral's orders were of the strictest that nothing was to be accepted without fitting compensation of beads, bells, and other like trifles, all of which were received by the grateful Cubans as of celestial origin. In answer to the Admiral's persistent inquiries, they could give little information as to the extent of Cuba, whether it were island or continent, or in just what direction lay Mangi and Cathay. Of the latter Asiatic province he could learn nothing; but he fancied that the name of the former one was repeated intelligently by the natives and that they indicated that it was somewhere beyond. Of gold they had little or none and seemed to care nothing for it; but all concurred in pointing to the south, and saying that in that quarter was a great country where was gold in plenty. So consistent and general were these affirmations, that after he had passed a fortnight on the Cuban coast and reached a point a little to the east of Cape Cruz, the Admiral determined to steer due south until he came to the land of which he heard so much. That it was not far off he knew, for the Indians passed fearlessly between it and Cuba in their light canoes. They called it Hamaica, or something that sounded like this, and there may have been, as Las Casas suggests, some thought in the Admiral's mind that this was the golden Babeque or Baveca, of which he had heard so much on his first voyage. At all events, on the 13th of May, he headed the fleet directly away from the Cuban coast and sailed southward. The voyage was not a long one, for at daylight on the following morning there lay dead ahead of the fleet a colossal group of mountain peaks, rising in symmetrical terraces from the water's edge to and beyond the heavy masses of vapor which partially hid their crests from sight. It was a repetition, on a vaster scale, of the scenic glories of Guadalupe and Dominica, save that the outlines of this latest landfall were somewhat less angular, and there was a languorous haze which the islands of the Caribs did not possess. So majestic was the appearance of the island that it seemed worthy of a name of peculiar honor, and accordingly the Admiral christened it Santiago, in homage to the patron

saint of Spain. A nearer approach to this favored land only revealed new beauties, but light winds kept the ships off shore until Monday morning. The Admiral hastened then to cast anchor in the first roadstead that offered a fair haven ; but, on the small boats attempting to land, they were beset by a numerous flotilla of canoes which put out from the beach filled with native warriors well armed with lances and bows, who made unmistakable demonstrations of hostility. Not wishing to provoke a conflict, for the Admiral's orders were positive against this, the boats returned to the caravels which weighed anchor at once and stood alongshore toward the west. Some twenty miles in that direction they reached a spacious harbor, shaped like a horse-shoe, to which the Admiral gave the name of Puerto Bueno. Anchoring here, the fleet encountered a reception similar to that from which it had just escaped. The Indians swarmed in their canoes about the vessels, threatening the Christians with a fierceness which led the latter to classify them rather with the warlike cannibals than with the pacific peoples of Cuba and the Vega Real. So daring were the Jamaicans that the Admiral thought it necessary to give them a realizing sense of the white men's power, so he directed a number of cross-bows to be discharged into the swarm of canoes surrounding the ships. Half a dozen Indians were wounded by the bolts which followed this order, whereupon their companions gave up their show of hostility and withdrew to a safe distance. Having accomplished his object, — whether well or ill depends upon the circumstances of the occasion, — the Admiral caused every effort to be made, both from the ships and on shore when his men landed, by the offer of attractive gewgaws and constant exhibitions of friendliness, to restore confidence among the natives and establish peaceable relations. It did not take long to accomplish this, and soon the usual traffic was in progress, and Indians as well as Spaniards were content with the result. Great throngs of the Jamaicans visited the ships, and from them some knowledge of their country was picked up. They knew where to find gold and it was plentiful. Their country was surrounded by water ; off yonder, somewhere in the south or west, was

another great country. Altogether, the sum of their information was not great, and the Admiral saw that he was as far from Mangi and Cathay as ever. He proposed sailing westward along the northern shore of Jamaica to learn something more of its size and character, but before doing so wished to stop a serious leak which had sprung in one of his caravels. Accordingly, he careened her on a convenient beach in the harbor where the squadron was lying, and, while the work was being done, accumulated a stock of provisions from the natives, and investigated as far as he could the country and its people. Three or four days were passed at this place, during which time the best of relations were established with the islanders. When the squadron resumed its cruise, following the coast towards the west, the Indians put out freely from points alongshore and accompanied the vessels, keeping up a running traffic with the sailors and displaying every demonstration of eager delight. It was the experience of the first voyage repeated.

On approaching the western extremity of the island a succession of violent headwinds was encountered which forbade for the present any effort to continue the cruise towards the south. The insular character of Jamaica was determined, and nothing of immediate importance was to be gained by lingering on its shores. The Admiral, therefore, put about and laid his course again for Cuba, making its coast on the 18th of May at the cape now called Cruz, a little to the west of the point whence he had sailed for Jamaica. It was his purpose to continue his exploration of Cuba towards the west for 500 or 600 leagues, if need be, until he had finally discovered whether it was in truth a part of the Asiatic continent, or only the huge island which some of its natives had affirmed. As he pursued his way the coast trended more and more to the south, thus strengthening the continental theory, and, as day after day passed without any indication of a northerly bend, this idea became well-nigh a settled conviction in the minds of all on board the three caravels. The difficulties of navigation increased as the voyage proceeded. The terrific rain-storms of the tropics, with their violent bursts of wind, inky skies, incessant lightning and deafening thunder

peals, broke daily over the undecked vessels, threatening to overwhelm them between the weight of water entering from overhead and that shipped from the tempest-lashed sea. Long lines of dangerous shoals beset their course, on which they would infallibly have been wrecked but for the exercise of a laborious and constant vigilance. The experience was new and alarming to all, for the precautions with which they were familiar seemed idle ; if they attempted to heave to and ride out the storms, they were in peril of the surrounding shoals, and if they carried the sail necessary to avoid these, they were liable to be thrown on their beam ends by the first fierce blast. In spite of these obstacles the Admiral pursued his course, keeping as near the coast as it was prudent and picking his way through the cays and shallows as best he could. As he got farther westward he entered a labyrinth of small islands ; some were reefs awash with the surface of the water, others were well wooded and inviting. This archipelago expanded, as he made his way cautiously through its tortuous channels, until, in a single day, the sailors counted 160 islets of varying sizes. Even the Admiral's fertility in name-choosing was unequal to furnishing a distinctive title for each of this infinite array, so he called the whole group *The Queen's Garden*, as he had, the year before, called the corresponding group off the northern coast of Cuba, *the Garden of the King*. The slow rate of progress to which the vessels were necessarily confined, afforded frequent occasion for landing on the islands, and thus the Spaniards observed the strange animals and birds with which they abounded. For the same reason they watched more closely than was their wont the countless varieties of fish which swarmed in the narrow waters, and found a welcome change from their limited commissariat in the shoals of turtle which floated sleepily on the water's surface or lay idly on the sandy keys. As the squadron cleared the shoals and entered the maze of forest-burdened islets, the air grew heavy with the fragrance of blossom and shrub, especially at night, when, the day's storm being over and the brilliancy of a growing moon flooding all about them with its grateful light, even the rough seamen found some compensation for the

toils and perils of the trying day. Even in the clearer channels through which the vessels were now threading, they were exposed to constant risk of running aground, and, despite double watches and masthead lookouts, the "Niña" drove on a hidden bank and was only warped off with infinite patience and labor. Few of the islands were inhabited, and on these the population was small and scattered. Generally the Indians showed no fear, approaching the caravels and offering their fish or other trifling commodities with simple hospitality. On one of the largest, — of sufficient importance to be christened by the not very distinctive name of Santa Maria, — a village of considerable size was found ; but here the natives took to the woods at the approach of the white men, leaving their scanty possessions to be examined by their visitors at leisure. To all the natives encountered some gift of beads or bells was made, and nothing was taken from them, even when freely offered, without an equivalent being returned. For a slave-driver, Columbus certainly acted with a singular considerateness in dealing with his prey.

The Indians of this archipelago united in saying that it spread out in all directions away from the mainland of Cuba, and was of indefinite extent. This, with a threatened scarcity of fresh water on the vessels, decided the Admiral to return to the Cuban coast ; so, on the 3rd of June, he gradually worked his way to the northward and struck the coast somewhere about the modern Trinidad or Xagua. Here the forest was so dense, down to the very water's edge, that it was impossible to ascertain whether this part of the coast was inhabited or not. The small boats were rowed close alongshore to look for signs of native habitation, but none were discovered until a sailor, less fearful or more energetic than his shipmates, arming himself with a cross-bow, landed and entered the woods to hunt birds. Scarcely had he disappeared in the thick jungle when his companions heard him calling loudly for assistance, and hastily ran to his rescue. When they arrived he was alone, but related that he had run against a band of some thirty Indians, stealthily watching the caravels and boats from behind the curtain of trees and vines. All were armed with wooden

spears and bows and arrows, and some carried in addition great double-edged swords of heavy wood.<sup>1</sup> One of the men, he affirmed, was clad in a long white tunic reaching to the ground. They offered no harm to the solitary invader when he came among them, but, at the sound of his shouts for aid, had instantly dispersed and glided into the trackless woods. The Spaniards returned on board ship, and related their experience to the Admiral, who sent an armed party ashore the next day to trace the fugitives to their home, if possible. The detachment stumbled through a mangrove swamp and forced a painful way through the matted undergrowth for a couple of miles, and came back empty-handed to report the impracticability of conducting a pursuit through such obstacles, only to be confronted with the jungle-covered slopes of the steep mountains visible in the distance. The Admiral accepted the result with regret, for the story of the white-clothed warrior — the only Indian thus hampered who had been met with in the New World, so far — had revived his hope of meeting with indications of higher civilization as he pursued his western journey. It is, indeed, permissible to question the absolute veracity of the Spanish sailor who made the discovery. It was a golden opportunity for the lonely tar to exercise his active Andalusian or Basque imagination, and he should be an exception to the class did he not, on meeting his comrades, draw with his tongue a bow far longer than the one he carried in his hand. Whether true or false, his tale gained a ready credence, and even in the Admiral's lifetime the solitary Indian in his alleged tunic had expanded into a whole race of white-robed Asiatics. As such it has been the subject of learned conjecture and dissertation in our modern histories, and thus is likely to remain. We give the fact as Columbus related it in his lost journal, and as Las Casas copied it therefrom.

Still following the coast towards the west, the squadron

<sup>1</sup> Las Casas describes these formidable weapons minutely, and says that the Cubans called them *macanas*. Similar arms, of the same name, are still common among the more warlike tribes of the Amazon Basin and Guiana, and constitute only one of the many links which bind their possessors to the *Caribes* of Columbus's day.



came upon a village by the seashore, whose people swarmed out in their canoes to offer what they possessed in exchange for the strangers' trinkets. One of these natives was kept on board by the Spaniards, greatly to the distress of his companions and to his own evident alarm, in order to learn something of the country which seemed to stretch so interminably beyond them. From him the Admiral gathered that Cuba was an island, that the sea surrounded it on all sides, that an infinite number of smaller islands lay along its shores, and that, in the part of it which he had now reached, ruled a king who never spoke, but indicated his wishes by signs alone. Moreover, this mysterious potentate wore a long robe, and some faint hope suggested itself to the Admiral's mind that he might be that famous Prester John of whom such marvellous tales were told by the few Europeans who had penetrated Asia and Africa. The mere thought was enough to stimulate him to fresh effort, and he found in this part of his informant's story a conclusive refutation of that other part which affirmed the insular character of Cuba. Who had ever heard of an island in connection with this famous prince? Was he not known to rule in the very heart of Asia, — somewhere? It was worth a struggle against every difficulty to reach such a goal. Continuing thus hopefully on his course, he shortly found his vessels entangled amid treacherous banks of sand, on one of which they grounded, despite the utmost caution. A scant fathom of water covered this bar, which was two ship's-lengths wide, and there was nothing to do but turn to and warp the caravels off their dangerous berth, if it might be done. The task was a difficult one, and for a season it seemed as though the disaster of the Christmas of '92 was to be repeated on a more fatal scale; but at length the ships were hauled into deep water with no greater damage done than the starting of some seams. The voyage was resumed and the fleet again became entangled amid a maze of small islands and shoals. The Admiral noted with interest, despite his perils, the variety of animal life with which both air and water abounded in this curious archipelago. The shallow seas swarmed with fish and turtles; dense flocks of pigeons and

doves passed overhead ; gulls and other marine birds circled about the vessels in countless numbers ; and, on one day, the air was literally filled from morning until night with myriads of gaudy butterflies drifting Cuba-wards in one of the vast migrations which herald the changing seasons. We know all about these things now, but to the sailors of the little fleet they were marvels. An "island" along one of whose shores they had been sailing for six weeks without changing their main direction ; a wilderness of shoals and islets, the like of which they had never so much as heard of ; a sea as milk-white as that of the Carib Islands had been sapphire blue ; sea, land, and air filled with strange shapes in multitudes surpassing belief, and all these prodigies increasing in number and degree as the long westward journey continued, —such were the influences at work on the minds of the Admiral's companions as they slowly worked their vessels through the tortuous channels of the island groups which fringe the southwestern coasts of Cuba.

With Columbus himself other considerations weighed heavily against his eager desire to set at rest the nature of the land he had been so patiently examining and the mysteries it contained. According to his computations he had sailed for more than 300 leagues towards the west from Cape Alpha and Omega, without discovering any indication of the coast turning northwards. He was now, he thought, 700 leagues west of Dominica, the most easterly of the new lands he had discovered. Who could conceive, under these circumstances, that Cuba was other than the extremity of Asia ? Who had ever imagined an island a thousand miles long, or an archipelago two thousand miles in width ? Moreover, the coast was now trending more and more to the south, thus clearly demonstrating the fact that the country was expanding into continental proportions. What doubt remained that Hispaniola, Jamaica, Buriquen, and the isles of the Caribs were the gigantic islands said to lie east of Asia, and that Cuba was the easternmost province of that continent ? He could, indeed, by proceeding on his voyage, add more leagues of coast to those already followed ; but they might, after all, add nothing to his knowledge, unless he were pre-

pared to prolong indefinitely his absence from Hispaniola, and this was far from being the case. In truth, he was already painfully anxious to return and inform himself of the welfare of the colony. It was time for some news to be arriving from Spain; Margarite's expedition should be concluded by the time the squadron reached Isabella; the building of that town required attention, and, even more, its citizens. All these reflections, the Admiral says, caused him to pass days and nights of painful thought. Added to these were the facts that the ships were now dangerously bare of provisions of all kinds, that the men were grumbling with ever-increasing audacity, and that further navigation toward the west seemed to offer only a succession of the same perils from which they had already more than once so narrowly escaped. To pursue the voyage, in face of these conditions, would be to risk more than would be justifiable. Had he consulted only his own inclinations, he would have followed the setting sun until he had—as he firmly believed he should—reached Spain by circumnavigating the earth. So emphatic was his belief that he had only to skirt this presumed Asiatic coast for enough weeks and he should arrive at Cadiz, that he formulated his itinerary: “doubling the Golden Chersonesus,<sup>1</sup> crossing the Gulf of Ganges, and by a new route, either around Africa, or going up the Red Sea and so overland to Joppa and Jerusalem, reach Spain.” The prospect was one of captivating brilliancy to a mind filled, as his was, with grand schemes of geographical exploration and mystical dreams of ousting the Paynim from the Holy City. But this was not his present mission; he had left Isabella to discover the true character of Cuba, and had established beyond all possibility of cavil that it was part of some mainland. That this was Asia was, in his opinion, a matter of course. His duty fulfilled, there was, consequently, every reason why he should sacrifice his own preferences and return to the colony at Isabella with all convenient speed.

It was the consistent habit of Columbus to consult with his pilots and chief mariners on all occasions of crisis or

<sup>1</sup> The Malay Peninsula of our times.

difficulty. We find him doing it frequently on the first voyage of discovery and all succeeding ones ; he did it now. His own belief was that Cuba was the eastern extremity of Asia ; he re-christened, in his diary, the cape formerly called Alpha and Omega — in symbolic reference to this faith — by the more emphatic title of “End of the Orient.” Every indication, to his mind, confirmed this view. But some of the natives, both on the northern shore during his first voyage and along this southern coast during the present one, had asserted, or seemed to assert, that Cuba was only another vast island. This, therefore, was the question which he determined to submit to his skilled companions : Was this land of Cuba, in their judgment, an island or not ? They had seen all the other huge islands ; was this only another one ? Their Majesties of Spain had repeatedly urged the Admiral to satisfy himself on this score, and report to them as fully as possible. It was essential, in their dispute with Portugal, that they should know whether their officer had indeed reached the eastern extension of the oriental continent. It consequently behooved Columbus to collect all the evidence he properly could on this vital point before ceasing his exploration. This he accordingly proceeded to do in the customary and established manner.

Our readers will no doubt recall the extreme, almost ludicrous, importance attached in all Spanish and most Latin countries to the solemn notarial *acta*. Among all but the most sophisticated, it is considered to rival the Tables of Stone in its imperative force and the Medean laws in its inviolability. Four hundred years ago it was even more revered than now ; and when, on the morning of Thursday, the 12th of June, 1494, the Admiral called upon the royal notary, Fernando Perez de Luna, to draw up an *acta* as to the general opinion prevalent in the fleet concerning Cuba, he was complying with one of the commonest formalities of his day and station. Nothing that he or any one else could say would have the weight of such a document, and the notary present on the flagship was there to obtain for the information of the Crown just such official depositions concerning matters open to dispute. The notary was directed,

in this instance, to first take the declarations of the officers and crew of the "Niña," and then proceed, in company with credible witnesses, to the "San Juan" and "Cordera," and take the opinions of those ships' companies. Before doing so he was obliged, by law, to read the demand or requisition made upon him by the Admiral, so that all who were questioned should have full knowledge of what they were expected to answer. As this portion of the paper contains the deliberate asseveration by sixty-five men, including some of the foremost navigators and seamen of the time, that the island of Cuba was part of the continent of Asia, and as it gives the arguments which satisfied Columbus himself, it will bear translating.

"On board the caravel 'Niña,' which is also called the 'Santa Clara,' Thursday, the 12th of June, in the year of Our Lord's Birth 1494, the most noble Señor Don Christopher Columbus, High Admiral of the Ocean Sea, Viceroy and Perpetual Governor of the island of San Salvador and of all the other islands and mainland of the Indies, discovered or to be discovered, etc., etc., demanded of me, Fernando Perez de Luna, one of the notaries public of the city of Isabella, on behalf of their Majesties, [to bear witness] :

"That he had sailed from the said city of Isabella with three caravels to come and discover the mainland of the Indies ; for, although he had already discovered a part of it on the other voyage which he made here the last year of our Lord, 1493 [*sic*], he was not able to learn definitely concerning it, since, notwithstanding that he had remained a long time upon its coasts, he found nobody who could give him positive information, as all the people were naked, having no property or society, being a folk who do not go away from their homes and are visited by none others, according to what he was told by themselves ; for which reason he did then not affirm positively that it was the mainland, but pronounced the matter doubtful and called the country Juana in memory of Prince John, our sovereign ;

"That he has now sailed from the said city of Isabella on the 24th of April and arrived at that part of the said country of Juana which lies nearest to the island of Isabella [*sic*] and which is shaped like a gore running from east to west, with the point at the end towards Isabella, from which it is twenty-two leagues distant ; that he has followed the coast of this country towards the

west, on the side of the south, to reach a very large island called Jamaica by the Indians, and has found it after sailing a great distance; that he named this the island of Santiago and followed its whole coast from east to west, returning afterwards to the mainland, which he calls Juana, at the place whence he had departed; that he followed the coast of this latter country westward for many days, until he declares that, by his rules of navigation, he has sailed more than 335 leagues from the time he first struck it until now; that on this course he has recognized many times, and so proclaimed, that this was the mainland, both because of its shape and of the information he has acquired concerning it and the name of the people of the provinces, especially the province of Mango; that now, after having found countless islands, which no one can accurately number, and arrived here at a village, he has taken several Indians who have told him that the coast of this country continues toward the west for more than twenty days' journey, and they do not know whether it ends even there; that from that point he determined to continue on somewhat farther, so that the people on these vessels—among whom are masters skilled in sailing by the charts and very good pilots, the most famous which he could choose from among those of the large fleet he brought from Spain—should see how very great is this country and that from here its coast runs toward the south, as he had told them; that he therefore sailed on for four days' journey more, so that all might be very sure that it was *terra firma*,—for in all these islands and countries there is no town on the seashore, but only naked people who live upon fish, who never go inland, or even four leagues from their houses, or know what the world is like but believe that it is made up of islands,—a race without law or belief of any kind, except to be born and die, and who have no education by which they may learn aught of the world;

“Therefore, in order that when this voyage is finished no one shall have cause through malice either to speak evil or slightly of things which deserve great credit, the said Admiral has required of me, the said notary, as above recited, on behalf of their Majesties, that I should go personally, with faithful witnesses, on board each of the said three caravels, and should demand of the master and crew and all other persons who are aboard them that they publicly declare whether they have any doubt that this is the mainland at the beginning of the Indies, or its end for any one who should desire to come into these parts overland from Spain; and, if there should be among them any doubt or contrary belief, that I should ask them to declare



it, so that it might be set at rest, and they should be shown that this is true and that it is indeed the mainland. And I have thus done and have demanded publicly," etc.

The notary then recites in detail the question he put to each officer or sailor individually, and their sworn answers. To quote one of these replies, for all : —

"The pilots, masters, and seamen, after studying their sea charts, reflected and said as follows: Francisco Niño, townsman of Moguer, pilot of the caravel 'Niña,' declares by the oath he has taken that he has never heard of or seen an island which could be 335 leagues in length on one coast, from west to east, and its exploration even not yet ended; that he sees now the coast turning S.S.W., West, and S.W., and assuredly has no doubt that this is the mainland, and no island; and that before going many leagues along this coast a country would be found where civilized people live, who know what the world is," etc.

The master of the "Niña," Alonzo Medel, Juan de la Cosa, her famous chart navigator, and seventeen seamen and sailors made similar affirmation. So did Bartolomé Perez, pilot of the "San Juan," Alonzo Perez Roldan, her master, and Alonzo Rodriguez, her first mate, together with twelve of their crew. So did Cristobal Perez Niño, master, Fenerin Ginoves, mate, and Gonzalo Alonzo Galeote, chief seaman, of the "Cordera," with all of her crew, to say nothing of the half-dozen witnesses. The name, birth-place, and station of each deponent are given, and each in his turn makes a declaration identical with that of the "Niña's" pilot; and at no subsequent time, even when such assertion would have brought profit and applause, did any one of them claim that he had been deceived by Columbus.

So far as such a "round robin" could have weight, this was one without a flaw. It was not the first of its kind, as its cut and dried phraseology abundantly indicates; it surely was not the last, for even comparatively modern voyagers have availed themselves of much the same kind of consensus. But it was proposed by Columbus and prepared for him, and, hence, in the judgment of his critics, bristles with fraud, hypocrisy, and tyranny. The notary, in closing

his formal period, invokes the ancient penalties for perjury: "and I have imposed the fine of 10,000 maravedies for each time that any one should in the future say the contrary of what he now swears, and he shall have his tongue cut out; and if he is a sailor or person of that class he shall receive a hundred lashes and also have his tongue cut out." The Admiral had nothing to do with this ostensibly sanguinary provision; the notary included it in his *acta* as an obligatory recitation. He threatened to mutilate the perjurers, not Columbus. Just how he was going to cut out their tongues the second time is not clear, or how they were to repeat their offence when already tongueless. Nor does it matter that the whole threat was an empty piece of what the Spaniards would term "of course,"—a relic of still ruder days to which no one paid less heed than did the worthy notary, who was obliged to paddle from one ship to another, between the showers, to take the tiresome testimony of these wooden-headed mariners from Palos, Huelva, Moguer, and every port between Fuentarabia and Rosas Gulf. It was enough that the *acta* was in support of the Admiral's own convictions and hopes for it to excite a tempest of denunciation among his recent censors. In using this means of certification, we are told "Columbus committed himself to the last resort of deluded minds when dealing with geographical or historical problems." His conduct was "audacious and arrogant." He "forced his men to sign a paper expressing the same belief" as he held concerning Cuba, and so on, and so on.<sup>1</sup> We may admit, without argument, that Columbus did vacillate sadly on this point; that sometimes he understood the Indians to say that Cuba was an island, and gave them unwilling credence; and again gathered with joy from their gestures and jargon that it was of boundless extent, and earnestly impressed upon all about him this supposed confirmation of his own hopes. Beyond all dispute, had he possessed a reliable atlas of the West Indies and the American continent, such hesitation would

<sup>1</sup> Yet these same writers see nothing to criticise in the same claim when made by Cabot two years later, who believed that he had seen the shores of Tartary when off Labrador.

have implied great mental obtuseness, and his endeavor to persuade others that Cuba was the mainland of Asia would have merited most of the violent criticism it has received. But, under the circumstances as they existed, there really seems to have been a reasonable excuse for his course ; and those of my readers who have tried to gain an exact knowledge of their surroundings, among untrodden wilds or un-navigated waters, from savages speaking an only partially comprehensible tongue, will sympathize rather with the Admiral in his dilemmas than with his critics.

While these depositions were being recorded by the notary the three caravels were lying at anchor at the western extremity of what we now call the Gulf of Batabano on the southwestern coast of Cuba. From the repeated references in the *acta* and elsewhere to the direction taken by the prolongation of this coast as seen from the vessels, Humboldt has established with his customary acumen the fact that they were in all probability then lying in the identical bay which Cortez, in 1519, appointed as the rendezvous for his armada and whence he sailed upon his expedition against Mexico. Columbus himself, at one time, was almost persuaded that it was the veritable Gulf of the Ganges, on account of its myriad islands. It proved to be the western limit of his present voyage, for on the following day, June 13th, influenced by the motives we have stated, he reluctantly abandoned the prosecution of his westward cruise and led the way toward the south, with the intent of escaping the tangle of shoals and islands in which he was involved and finding an open sea for his eastward run back to Hispaniola. He steered first for an island of greater size than its fellows, where he provided his vessels with wood, water, and such poor supplies of native food as it might afford. To this island he gave the name of Evangelista, but it stands on our maps as the Isle of Pines. After leaving it, the vessels slowly felt their way for ten days through a maze of blind leads, now grounding, now threatened with wreck on some bank to leeward in the sudden squalls of the afternoons, until the crews became disheartened and sullen, and their commander could with difficulty infuse into them any of his

own persistent courage. At the end of this time they had to return baffled to Evangelista and make a fresh start. They succeeded now in getting clear of the tortuous channels, but found themselves in shallow seas whose unfamiliar colors, — vivid green, milky white, inky black, — shifting with startling abruptness and frequency, added a new terror to the sailors' minds in their constant menace of imminent destruction. On the 30th of June, while the Admiral was writing in his cabin, his flagship drove hard and fast on a shoal. So firmly was she held by the greedy sands that the staunch little "Niña" wellnigh shared the fate of her quondam consort, the "Santa Maria"; but by dint of much ingenuity and exertion she was lifted over the narrow bank and launched in safety on the farther side, with her timbers badly sprung from the merciless pounding to which her hull had been subjected. Soon after they made the Cuban coast at the point from which they had sailed after returning from Jamaica, and thence proceeded eastwards along-shore. At one place, where a native village was built close to the beach, the Admiral landed to hear Mass on Sunday, July 6th. An old cacique, who watched with keen interest the white men's ceremonies, at their conclusion offered Columbus a calabash filled with fruits as a token of amity. Squatting then upon his heels, he made an address to the Admiral which Diego, the interpreter, translated into as philosophical a disquisition on immortality and the future life as Socrates delivered in prison. To this his auditor replied in becoming phrase, agreeing in the main with his theological propositions and explaining that his own motive in visiting Cuba and the adjacent islands was to benefit their inhabitants, especially by ridding them of their dreaded Carib invaders. We are informed that the venerable chieftain received these assurances with tears of joy, and the affecting incident was brought to a close by a brisk interchange of gifts. What the old Indian really did say it is, of course, idle to conjecture; but we may safely assume that it was not the Platonic discourse which the interpreter supposed, and which has excited so much edifying commentary from the days of Peter Martyr down.

After leaving this anchorage, the fleet encountered a succession of gales which nearly ended its career. The seas continually shipped by the little vessels, especially over the low freeboard they presented amidships, kept all hands toiling at the pumps; while the scanty rations were still further reduced until each man's daily allowance, except when a few fish could be caught, was a pound of spoiled biscuit and a half-pint of watered wine. These harassing experiences persisted until the 18th of July, when the voyagers arrived at the Cape of the Cross, where the natives supplied them abundantly with cassava, fruits, and fish. After resting here two or three days, the Admiral resumed his homeward cruise, only to be met with such stubborn headwinds that he was blown off his course and was glad to make for the western extremity of Jamaica. The occasion being propitious, he decided to sail around this island, and accordingly doubled its western cape and followed its coast toward the south and east. After the fatigues and perils of the past weeks, the Admiral and his companions fairly revelled in the majestic beauty of the varied panorama which unfolded as they swept along the apparently well-peopled shores. The natives thronged in their canoes from bay and headland, proffering the Spaniards food and fruits "as though they all were the fathers and the Indians their sons." The Admiral himself, freed from his recent distressing cares, allows his love of Nature to have full play, and dwells with delight on the fertility of the soil, the numbers and frank disposition of the inhabitants, and the evident comfort in which they lived. He notes that some of the loftiest mountains seem to attain a height sufficient to ensure snows in the proper season, and attributes the heavy rains he encountered to the dense and extensive forests which clothed their flanks; "for in the past the same thing happened in the Canaries, Madeira, and the Azores," he remarks; "but after the forests had been cut down and the vapors were dried up and dispersed, the heavy rainfalls in great measure came to an end."

Landing frequently as he pursued his voyage, and maintaining the most cordial relations with the Indians every-

where, he reached the eastern extremity of Jamaica on the 19th of August, and called it Beacon Cape. The wind serving for Hispaniola, he put out to sea at once, and on the following day was in sight of the western point of that island, which he christened Cape St. Michael and we know as Tiburon.







## X.

### THE REVOLT OF THE TRIBES.

WHEN he bestowed its name on Cape St. Michael, the Admiral did not know that it was part of Hispaniola; it was so far to the west and south of Cape St. Nicholas that he at first thought it was part of another island. But as he lay at anchor, the day after making land, a canoe-load of Indians came alongside the flagship and their leader called out "Admiral, Admiral," in good Spanish, following the words with a flood of native gutturals. Columbus was hugely delighted at this occurrence, for he gathered therefrom not only that he was again in Hispaniola, but that, in his absence, the expedition he had sent out under Margarite had penetrated to the western confines of the island and, as he presumed, met with no opposition. He determined to sail along the southern coast, rather than return by the northern route around Cape St. Nicholas, and, if the winds served, make a descent on the chief villages of the cannibals in Guadalupe and Dominica for the purpose of impressing them with the power of the Spanish arms. This project was doubtless based upon the expectation that by this season the Carib men should have returned from the forays on which they had gone when he landed on their islands a year before, and that it would redound greatly to the credit of the Spaniards, in the estimation of the other native tribes, if such a lesson were inflicted upon their dreaded invaders. That he should have contemplated doing anything of the sort with the petty force at his disposal is a striking instance of the supreme confidence the Europeans felt, both then and

always, in their superiority over the aborigines of the western world. Coasting leisurely to the eastward and studying the country as he passed, the Admiral reached on the 30th of August a lonely islet, which he called *Alta Vela*, from a fancied resemblance to a hoisted sail. Here he had to wait a week for his two consorts, which had become separated from him by a sudden tempest. Thence they passed to an island he called *Beata*, which is off the point of the same name about midway between Capes *Tiburón* and *Engaño*. From here he sailed into the Bay of *Azua*, whose level shores opened into wide and thickly populated savannahs corresponding closely with the great *Vega Real* on the northern coast. Wherever the fleet touched the natives came off in their canoes with gifts and friendly greetings, and from them the Admiral learned much concerning the condition of the colony at *Isabella* and the extent to which the scouting-parties had scoured the country. One band of Spaniards, it appeared, had come overland from *Isabella* to the very coasts where the fleet now was; so when he reached the River *Hayna*, not far from the present city of *San Domingo*, the Admiral landed a detachment of nine men, who were to cross the country to *Isabella*, bearing news of his welfare and intended early arrival at that port. The tidings given him by the Indians respecting the colony were uniformly favorable, so that his anxieties as to what had befallen it since his departure were to a great extent relieved.

Without further incident of interest the southeastern end of *Hispaniola* was reached, but here the voyagers met with a reception much like that the Admiral had suffered in *Samaná Bay* on the first voyage. When the ships' boats landed for water the natives poured down upon the Spaniards, brandishing their bows and lances and shaking cords to intimate that they would capture and bind the strangers if they approached. By the display of gifts and a friendly disposition a conflict was averted, and when the Indians learned that it was the *Guamiquina* in person who was on their shores they hastened to bring food and water in abundance with every indication of cordiality. From their warlike bearing and superior weapons, as compared with the tribes

farther west, and especially from their possession of poisoned arrows, Columbus argued that they were of the same hardy clan as the courageous warriors of Samaná, and treated them with marked consideration. It is worth noting, in turn, that although only four months had elapsed since he had left Isabella, and the colony had not more than four or five hundred men who were capable of undertaking any severe exertion, the Spaniards had spread so far beyond the narrow radius of forty or fifty miles, within which they had moved up to the time of the Admiral's leaving them, that on his return he found his title and power recognized from one end of the island to the other, a distance of four hundred miles. Had their energy been governed by a policy in which humanity and wisdom were one, the white men would have made a different history for the noble islands they so easily overran.

Leaving the pacified inhabitants of Higüey,—for so their territory was termed,—the fleet made for Cape Engaño,—or, as Columbus had christened it in June of '94, Cape St. Raphael,—intending to steer thence for Porto Rico and the Carib Islands before returning to Isabella. From various indications of sea and sky, and especially from the excited antics of a huge devil-fish which rose to the surface and threw itself about in a frenzied manner, the Admiral anticipated severe weather and accordingly sought for a haven. The rising storm separated the vessels, but the "Niña" found shelter under the lee of Saona Island, off the southeastern extremity of Hispaniola. The gale and subsequent contrary winds lasted a week, at the end of which time the "San Juan" and "Cordera" rejoined their consort, a good deal the worse for the buffeting they had received. While lying at anchor Columbus succeeded in taking a satisfactory observation of an eclipse of the moon, which occurred on the 15th of September. From the elements thus secured he deduced the calculation that there was a difference of five hours and twenty-three minutes in time between his position and Cadiz. To this eclipse, with an admixture of astronomy and meteorology characteristic of the day, he also attributed the duration and violence of

the tempest which had overtaken him,—a conclusion in which he was no doubt supported by the Ephemerides from which his data were derived. From Saona the fleet steered for Cape Engaño and thence passed to the island of Mona, about midway between Hispaniola and Porto Rico. From Mona a course was laid for the latter island, and the vessels had all but reached its coast when, without any premonition of the approaching calamity, the Admiral was stricken with a profound coma and fell to the deck as though dead. His affrighted companions gave him such attention as they thought efficacious, but he lay in such a lifeless stupor that they did not expect to see him survive the day. In this emergency they put about ships and headed again for the shores of Hispaniola. Their commander continued in the same deathlike trance for day after day, without a movement or sign of intelligence, as they rounded the Samaná Point and steered for Isabella; and when, on the 29th of September, the three caravels entered that harbor and came to anchor below the town, it was little better than a corpse that Don Diego Columbus and his newly arrived brother, Don Bartholomew, found when they hastened to greet the Admiral and Viceroy. For two and thirty nights in succession this indefatigable sailor had kept the deck in the perilous navigation among the Cuban shoals, besides sharing by day the labors of his shipmates and their scanty fare. The constant demands upon his attention and interest when coasting Jamaica and Hispaniola had prevented his getting any adequate rest later on. Now Nature had imposed her inevitable penalty, and it was an open question whether or not he should be spared the distresses of the future years by ending his career then and there.

Had he never regained consciousness, but passed away in the narrow cabin of the “Niña” or in his half-completed “palace” at Isabella, the fame of Columbus would, perhaps, have been none the less, while the limitations of his character would not have been so sharply defined as they were by subsequent events. The close of this cruise to Cuba and Jamaica marked, in fact, a distinct epoch in the Admiral’s life. It rounded off his discoveries of the

colossal islands to which the older world, in its confusion of ideas, variously referred as Antillia, the parts of India beyond the Ganges, Ophir, and Cipango. He had set at rest the fluctuating speculations which the Middle Ages had inherited from Antiquity, and fitted the missing half of our sphere to the one with which mankind was familiar. We say advisedly that he had *done* this, for had his life closed in September, 1494, any one of the pilots, masters, or mariners who had manned the fleet he brought from Spain could, and some of them would, have found the continent which lay so near. This was the inevitable sequel to the work Columbus had already performed. Nothing but the absolute and contemporaneous annihilation of every soul who had accompanied him could now prevent such a consummation. From Dominica to Jamaica and the western end of Cuba the Caribbean Sea was open to the Spaniards, and they had heard from scores of sources that populous and wealthy countries lay to the south, west, and north. Here were both direction and inducement. It was merely a question of a year or two, more or less, when some one should reach these goals. The Indians made the passage in their great canoes, and what they did with paddles surely Europeans might be expected to do with sails. In a word, the book was open for whomsoever had the desire and the means to read. Whether Columbus was right or wrong in conjecturing Hayti to be Cipango, and Cuba the Asiatic mainland, was immaterial. When his three caravels sailed into the port of Isabella with their unconscious commander, all that was essential in the problem of western navigation had been solved. An otherwise niggard fate did, indeed, later on, allow the Admiral to be the actual discoverer of the southern continent, as he had been of the great western world of which it was a part; but from our point of view his discovery of Paria was only an interesting incident in his career, not an element of his fame.

Several days elapsed before Columbus regained the full use of his faculties. When he was able to recognize those about him, and saw in their number the stalwart form of his brother Bartholomew, his joy knew no bounds; for this

was a man after his own heart. The last time the brothers had met was in the trying days when, wearied with his ineffectual efforts to obtain the assistance of the Spanish Crown, Columbus turned to the other courts of Europe for the aid he needed to prosecute his plans of discovery. At that season Bartholomew had undertaken to present the project to the English king, Henry VII., and had parted from Christopher with that intention. How and where he had been delayed during the intervening years is largely matter for conjecture, and is not germane to our narrative. He was, at all events, in London when he heard of his brother's return to Spain from his first voyage. Making such speed as he could to rejoin him, Bartholomew reached Seville only to find that the Admiral had already sailed on his second expedition. That there was some communication, however infrequent and unreliable (as the times compelled), between the two brothers, is shown by the fact that he found letters awaiting him from the Admiral, indicating what course he should pursue. In compliance with these he presented himself before the King and Queen, by whom he was graciously received, and commanded to follow the Admiral in a squadron of three caravels which was leisurely being fitted out to carry supplies and despatches to the colony. These vessels sailed from Cadiz towards the end of April, 1494, and reached Isabella early in August, long after the Admiral had left on his Cuban cruise. During the seven weeks which passed between his arrival and the return of the Admiral, Bartholomew had ample opportunity to learn from his younger brother Diego all that had occurred since the colonists had reached Hispaniola. Being a man of affairs and action, devoted to his brother's interests, prudent, well-poised, and coolly courageous, his presence was an inestimable advantage to the Admiral, and no doubt contributed more than anything else to furnish to the latter the moral stimulus needed to overcome the physical collapse into which he had fallen.

Equally grateful to the disabled leader were the despatches which Bartholomew had brought from the King and Queen. The squadron in which he came was on the



point of leaving Cadiz when, on the 10th of April, the twelve vessels commanded by Antonio de Torres sailed into port on their return from Hispaniola, bearing the first tidings which had been received from the colony. The three caravels were accordingly detained until Torres could send to their Majesties the budget with which he had been entrusted by their Admiral and Viceroy. The news only emphasized the necessity of hastening forward the provisions and supplies with which the squadron was laden, and it was hurried away as soon as a few short letters could be written and some slight additions made to its cargo. Ferdinand and Isabella did not wait to receive the detailed reports which Torres was preparing to deliver in person, but contented themselves with sending a short message of sympathy and encouragement, with the promise of longer correspondence and more abundant supplies by another squadron which should be fitted out immediately. Few as were the words Don Bartholomew brought from the sovereigns, they were more efficacious than a cordial to the exhausted and anxious Admiral.

"In much esteem and consideration we hold you," their Majesties wrote, "for what you have done out yonder, which could not be better. . . . Rest assured that we deem ourselves to be greatly served and laid under obligation by you on account of it, and bound to render you thanks, honor, and advancement, as your great services demand and merit. . . . There is no time now to reply as we would wish, but when the other squadron goes, we shall answer and provide for everything by it, as may be needed. We have been displeased by the things which have been done out yonder in opposition to your wishes. By the first vessels which come here send Bernal de Pisa, to whom we have written that he get his affairs in shape to leave. In the office which he has filled place the person whom to you and Fray Boil should seem best, until other arrangements can be made from here."

This association with himself of the meddlesome priest may have seemed to the Admiral to be an invasion of his prerogatives; but it was not, under the circumstances, a matter of moment. The wily churchman had already gathered his robes around him and shaken the rich mould of Hispaniola from his sandals.

Columbus had double cause for self-congratulation upon his brother's arrival when he heard of what had occurred at Isabella and throughout the island during his absence; for a strong hand, quick understanding, and inflexible will were needed to prevent the complete disintegration of the Spanish colony and preserve its authority among the native tribes. As he listened to the discouraging reports and reflected upon his own inability to leave his couch, the one consolation he possessed lay in the thought that he had at last by his side a deputy whose loyalty was beyond suspicion and whose energy was equal to his own. The tale that was poured into his ears was enough to have shaken the spirit of the strongest; that it did not break his own, in his enfeebled state, is evidence, if any were needed, of the indomitable courage which was his most salient characteristic. The troubles had their origin, it appeared, with Margarite. Instead of carrying out the Admiral's written instructions and pursuing a systematic course of pacific exploration, this officer, as soon as the commander-in-chief had sailed from Isabella, had marched back with all his forces from Cibao into the Vega Real and quartered himself upon the hospitable inhabitants of that favored region. Far from investigating the rugged interior and leading a demonstration against the warriors of Caonabo, Margarite had abandoned himself to the agreeable idleness of a life where he was revered as a god and anticipated in every wish by a confiding and attractive people. Like master, like man: his 400 soldiers, or the greater part of them, each chose such village or household as to him seemed best, installed himself as a deity, inferior, indeed, to the great central divinity, but yet a god, established his own harem, and ruled over his own band of obsequious and somewhat frightened drudges. Viceroy, King, Queen, Spain, Isabella, Caonabo,—all these were but words to jeer at; Margarite and his merry men were leading the life of the Golden Age and recked nothing of the morrow. The inevitable consequences followed a license which knew no shame and a despotism which feared no restraint. The Indians saw their homes violated, their little stores of food squandered,

themselves abused, and their fellows murdered, until their Pantheon of bearded gods rapidly developed into a veritable Pandemonium of insatiable tyrants. Unaccustomed to accumulating provision for the future, the natives soon were unable to supply the apparently fabulous requirements of their now unwelcome guests for all kinds of food; scarcity brought renewed ill-treatment and violence, in which the caciques and their King himself were menaced with outrage and torture. Gentle and simple-minded as the people were, they began to resent a treatment which threatened their very existence. Rumors of their disaffection reached the surrounding and more vigorous tribes of the mountains, and they agitated the question of making common cause with the plainsmen. The situation began to be grave, and the Council which represented the Viceroy in his absence felt called upon to remonstrate with Margarite for the course he was following. That high-spirited cavalier furiously resented their interference, scorned their remonstrance, and defied their authority in their own seat at Isabella. In this proceeding he was abetted, either openly or covertly, by Fray Boil and those who had sided with him and Bernal de Pisa in their earlier disputes with the Admiral. The townspeople were for the most part indisposed toward the government on general principle; the Council was utterly unable to enforce its requirements, and was, moreover, divided as to these. At this juncture the three caravels arrived from Spain, bringing fresh supplies and another foreign interloper in the person of Don Bartholomew Columbus. Perhaps Margarite and his faction gauged the man at once and saw that they had to deal with some one of a very different type from mild Don Diego; perhaps some sort of a compromise was reached by which the Admiral's brothers and their colleagues were glad to get rid of the malcontents.<sup>1</sup> At all events, as soon as the three ships were unloaded they

<sup>1</sup> That the loyal majority of the Council retained some control of affairs is exhibited by the retention of Bernal Diaz de Pisa at Isabella, under restraint. Had the malcontents been as powerful as some have claimed, they would surely have taken with them to Spain this invaluable witness against the Admiral.

were despatched again to Cadiz, and with them sailed Margarite, Fray Boil, nearly all his priests, and a goodly number of their sympathizers. Hispaniola was well rid of the whole connection, but they had only transferred their intrigues to the other side of the Atlantic, and were to be heard from again later on. The colony at Isabella was relieved by their departure and a quieter feeling prevailed than at any time since its foundation; but a contrary effect was produced among the soldiers who were living at ease in the hamlets of the Vega Real. Conscious of the motive and method of Margarite's defection, and sensible of the inability of the Council to control their actions, they abandoned all idea of discipline, and, breaking up into bands of greater or less size, wandered in whatever direction fancy dictated. Several parties made their way across country into the adjacent territories of Guacanagari; others went into the sierras of Cibao in search of gold; still others struck across the island to its southern shores; others yet drifted towards the east into the confines of Higüey: and so they went their several ways until they had emerged at the widely separated points where their traces had been found by the Admiral. They had, indeed, explored the island, but with far different results from those he had anticipated. Wherever they had gone there had been pillage, rapine, cruelty. What they coveted they took by force; what they wanted done they secured by violence. Presuming on their own prowess and despising the native feebleness, they became increasingly heedless of all consequences, until they placed themselves in the power of the people they were goading to desperation. News began to reach the colony of ambushes and massacres. Guatiguaná, cacique of a large village on the Yaqui, quietly put ten Spaniards out of the way at one stroke, and then set fire to a cabin wherein several more lay disabled by sickness. Other petty chiefs were glad to follow his lead, and here two or three, there half a dozen "Christians" were despatched. Rumors of these notable deeds circulated among the tribes and inspired the more warlike chieftains to efforts at emulation, until a concerted movement was set on foot, led by Caonabo, Mayrionex, and

two equally prominent native kings, to clear the whole island of the now abhorred strangers.

This was the position of affairs as described to the Admiral when he had recovered sufficiently to hear it: the native population was aroused to open hostility from one end of the island to the other; his soldiers scattered from Samaná Bay to Cape St. Nicholas; no gold collected; no fortresses established; his enemies on their way to Court to undermine his reputation,—and he helpless on his back in the grip of a disease which threatened to hold him prisoner for many a weary week. While he was considering the measures to be adopted for the restoration of the Spanish authority and the prosecution of his plans, he was visited by Guacanagari, who had heard of the Admiral's illness and had come from his own territory to confer with his former ally. This action of itself dispelled all doubts which might still have existed in the mind of Columbus as to the King's loyalty, and his confidence was further strengthened by the motive of the present visit. Guacanagari said that he had given shelter and protection to 100 Spaniards who had sought his assistance when the other caciques began to make reprisals upon the white men; that Caonabo and his associates had resented this as an act of treachery to the other tribes and had harried his country, slain his subjects, and in every way endeavored to force him to abandon the Spaniards and join his countrymen in warring upon them; that notwithstanding this persecution he was firm in his intention to maintain his alliance with the Admiral and to lend him every support in his power. Coming, as it did, at a moment when the whole aspect of his relations with the natives was so gloomy, this tender of coöperation was heartily welcome. Columbus explained to his old friend that as soon as he was well he should go to attack the hostile tribes and would gladly avail of Guacanagari's proffered help, in return for which the Spaniards would chastise his enemies and he be rewarded for his fidelity. With his knowledge of the inoffensive character of the people of Marien, the Admiral could not have attached great importance to their military efficiency, but it was something

gained if even a single tribe stood out in favor of the "Christians" when the whole island was in arms against them. The situation was in truth serious enough. The whole effective strength of the Spaniards at his disposal did not exceed 400 men, a large proportion of whom were rather invalids than sound soldiers. Besides these were small groups scattered, if not lost, throughout the country, and the garrison of Fort St. Thomas, which Hojeda still held with fifty or sixty men. Against this paltry force was arraying the entire fighting population of the central portion of the island, armed, it is true, with nothing better than bows and arrows, wooden spears, and heavy wooden swords, but formidable by reason of their numbers. How many really were mustering at the call of Caonabo and his associates there is no means of knowing, but it was an immense horde. The position of the colonists seemed desperate and Columbus found in Hojeda a man who would assume corresponding risks to relieve it. With nine mounted companions he undertook to execute the suspended project of seizing Caonabo, who was regarded by all, Europeans as well as natives, as the head of the whole insurrection. Riding far into this king's territory, overawing the Indians on the road by his formidable display of the terrible new animals,—half man, half great quadruped,—Hojeda succeeded in gaining possession of Caonabo and brought him safely to Isabella. One account says he cajoled the King into accompanying him by promising that the Spaniards would make him lord over the whole island. Another, on the correctness of which Las Casas insists, attributes Hojeda's success to the exhibition by him before Caonabo of a brightly polished chain and handcuffs of the coveted hard metal to which the Indians attributed a divine origin. They took its clanking to be the voice of the deity speaking to the white men, it appears; for they had remarked the signs of reverence which the colonists showed when the Angelus rang out from the little bell in Isabella, and the readiness with which they gathered around it when it sounded for Mass. This, the natives believed, was because the white men's god was talking to them, and that the divine gift was common to



all their strange metal. Hence, so goes the story, the offer of a brilliant and jangling chain of the celestial material was bait sufficient to separate the native King from his surrounding people and lure him to a distance, where the tempting links were quickly and safely attached to his limbs. When we consider the part taken by this same chief in the existing uprising, and, in particular, his reasons for distrusting the captain whose fort he had so lately been besieging, it is difficult to reconcile these stories with the probabilities, especially as a third version relates that Caonabo was taken prisoner in a skirmish. In whatever manner it was accomplished, the warrior King did become the Spaniards' prisoner and was securely confined at Isabella.<sup>1</sup>

Having thus disposed of his most formidable opponent, the Admiral sent out an expedition against Guatiguaná, the cacique who had caused the massacre of ten Spaniards and the burning of many more. The results were as might be expected when matchlock, cross-bow, and keen-edged blades were used by mail-clad veterans against naked levies armed with bone-tipped arrows and wooden assegais. No particular harm was done the Spaniards, while the Indians were shot and cut down in numbers which it was too troublesome to estimate. Their cacique escaped, but some 500 of his followers were secured alive and brought to the colony as slaves. With this example before him, Guarionex, the overlord of Guatiguaná and of all the other caciques in the Vega Real, was willing enough to follow the advice of Guacanagari and enter into an alliance with the Spaniards, which was cemented, to travesty the language of diplomacy, by the marriage of his daughter to Diego, the Admiral's trusted interpreter. There is no evidence that the colony gained an effective ally by this arrangement, but it was something that another chief whose territories bordered so closely upon Isabella was willing to refrain from

<sup>1</sup> If we compare the accepted account of Caonabo's seizure by Hojeda with the letter of instruction sent by Columbus to Margarite, we shall find some ground for believing that the story was in after years invented to agree with the orders known to have been given for Caonabo's capture.

joining the native confederacy. The seizure of Caonabo had only infuriated the other kings and caciques. Instigated by his three brothers, they were gathering their forces for an assault upon the colony which was intended to be irresistible. The Admiral attempted to frustrate this by sending out occasional raiding-parties into the nearer disaffected districts, and caused to be built another fortress, which he named Conception, in the heart of the Vega Real, between Isabella and Fort St. Thomas. But although the Indians were uniformly beaten in every skirmish and the Spaniards drove them by hundreds into the town to be held as slaves, the movement was too far-reaching and deeply rooted to be checked by any partial measures.

During all this time the Admiral was bed-ridden. Relying chiefly upon his brother Bartholomew and the ubiquitous Hojeda, he had directed the various movements and measures which seemed best calculated to check the threatened invasion, hoping to avert it until his health should be sufficiently recovered to enable him to take the field in person and conduct an offensive campaign.

Affairs were in this critical posture when, some time early in November, the anxious colonists saw with a joy whose extravagance was pardonable four caravels sailing into their harbor, coming direct from Spain. It was not long before all on shore knew that they were commanded by the same Antonio de Torres who had taken back the fleet of twelve ships in February, and were laden with the supplies of all kinds which were so sorely needed. To the Admiral the man, with the messages he brought, was as welcome as the provisions and stores, for he trusted Torres and saw in his speedy return to Hispaniola the establishment of a regular communication with the mother-country without which the settlement was likely to be hard pushed for existence. The report made by his officer was deeply gratifying to Columbus. Torres related his arrival at Cadiz a few days before Don Bartholomew's departure for Isabella in April, and the reasons which delayed his own immediate access to the King and Queen. As soon as he had been able to have an audience with their Majesties,

he had presented the Admiral's packet of letters and memorials, and the sovereigns had promptly instructed Fonseca to fit out eight caravels with abundant supplies of all kinds for the colony at Isabella. Later on, owing to the chronic scarcity of funds with the Spanish Crown, this squadron was divided into two: four caravels were to be prepared hastily and brought out by Torres, while the other four were to come out later. Their Majesties had been greatly pleased with all that Torres had to report and with the contents of the Admiral's despatches, and had given repeated orders to have everything arranged as the latter desired. Shortly before sailing with his four vessels, Torres had a final interview with the King and Queen, at which they had delivered to him sundry letters for the Admiral, and also the famous Memorial given by the latter to him on January 30th. On this document their Majesties had caused to be written, at the side of every paragraph, their replies to the representations and recommendations made by Columbus, and they now returned the annotated original to him as their reply to his report. We can imagine the interest with which the invalid Admiral broke the seals and ran his eye over the commentary which embraced the verdict of his royal master and mistress upon his course of action, under the unexpected conditions he had found confronting him on reaching Navidad. His enemies, headed by Fray Boil and Margarite, were already at Court or would soon be there, and it was all important to Columbus to know in what mood, concerning himself, they were likely to find Ferdinand and Isabella. The running comments dictated by their Majesties and inscribed on the returned Memorial left no doubt on this score, and freed the Admiral of at least all present anxiety as to the attitude of the King and Queen towards himself. It has pleased that class of critics, who have undertaken to free the world from the superstitious admiration under which it has so long and lamentably labored in respect of Columbus, to represent the Spanish sovereigns as entering "in the margins their comments and orders" . . . "just as it was perused by them." We are informed that, as the Admiral

“makes excuses and gives his reasons for not doing this or that, the compliant monarchs as constantly write against the paragraphs, ‘He has done well,’ ” etc. It must have been cause of added satisfaction to Columbus to notice (as his censors might have done, had they cared to be exact) that this is precisely what his royal patrons did *not* do. They did not pass their formal judgment upon his acts and proposals until the 15th of August, as the document itself shows,— four months after Torres had delivered it to them. At that time the comments were written out in his presence, to be enlarged upon and supplemented by the verbal messages which, as the paper shows, he was charged to give the Admiral. It is true that their Majesties did uniformly approve and applaud the report and its suggestions; but they did it after ripe reflection and with entire familiarity with all the facts; not impulsively and out of mere complaisance, as the detractors of Columbus would have us think. Even in the matter of the proposed enslaving of the Caribs, their Majesties heartily approved, in so far as the measure was ostensibly based upon a solicitude for the salvation of their souls. It was only in regard to the proposition to pay in cannibal slaves the costs of the future supplies needed for the colony that Ferdinand and Isabella informed Columbus that they preferred to wait until they should hear further from him on the subject; and in doing this they appear to have considered only the commercial expediency of the plan, not its moral obliquity. In short, as the Admiral read the royal comments upon his own memorial, and heard Torres add this, that, and the other verbal message from King or Queen, he had just reason for feeling that all he had done and projected was emphatically endorsed by them and would receive their cordial support. It was a vast relief to his anxious mind, and the fact that this approbation was not the fruit of an outburst of enthusiasm, born of a natural pleasure at seeing the great fleet safely returned and hearing of the successful founding of the colony, but was sober second thought on the eve of Torres’s setting out on his return to Isabella after four months of conference and consultation, added immensely

to the importance of the royal concurrence in the estimation of its recipient,—as it should in our own. In face of the record it is not worth while to try to minimize the acquiescence and applause of Ferdinand and Isabella. What Columbus had done and wished to do they liked and extolled, and they did not hesitate to say so unreservedly.

The formal letter which they sent by Torres, dated on the 16th of August,—just before his departure,—was still more pronounced in its sympathy and encouragement.

“We have read the letters and memorials which you sent us by Torres,” their Majesties wrote, “and have had great pleasure in knowing all that which you tell us therein. We return many thanks to our Lord for all this, because we hope that with his help this affair of yours may be the means by which our holy Catholic faith shall be much more widely extended. One of the chief reasons why this business has so greatly pleased us is that it has been planned, begun, and carried out by your skill, effort, and perseverance; for it appears to us that all which you assured us at the outset could be accomplished has, for the most part, proved exact, as though you had seen it all before you spoke to us about it.”

What more could any servant of any monarch desire than such words as these from the Crown he served?

“We have faith in God,” continues the letter, “that what yet remains to be learned will correspond with that which is past, for which latter we hold ourselves under much obligation to recompense you in such manner that you shall rest satisfied.”

What more specific acknowledgment of duty well performed could a servitor of the state receive? The King and Queen add that, “although you have written us sufficiently in detail about all matters of interest, so that it is a great joy and delight to read your letters, we should wish that you write us something more.” They catalogue the subjects upon which they desire more explicit information,—the number of all the islands found and their Indian names; the distance from one to the other, and the productions of each; the results of the sowing and planting of European seeds and cuttings; the climate of each month as compared with that of Spain, whether as “some would have

us believe, there are out yonder in each year two winters and two summers." Ferdinand would like all the falcons which can be secured in the new lands,<sup>1</sup> and specimens of all other birds. Torres will report concerning the filling of the Admiral's requisitions. Now that no further cause of dispute exists with Portugal, and the Spanish vessels can cross the ocean without fear of interception, at least one caravel per month should be despatched from Hispaniola, so as to maintain constant communication between Spain and the colony, provided this meets with the Admiral's approval.

"In what relates to the methods which you should adopt with the people you have out yonder, what you have so far done seems well to us, and so you should continue, giving them as much satisfaction as circumstances will allow. But do not allow them to fail in any of the things they ought to do and which you should order them to do in our name. In regard to the settlement you have founded, there is no one who can prudently give directions or improve anything from this distance. If we were there, we should follow your advice and opinion in this matter; how much the more when we are away! Therefore we leave the affair in your hands."

Their Majesties then refer to a copy which they enclose of the treaty signed between Spain and Portugal in the preceding June for the amicable adjustment of all disputes concerning the rights of each in the unknown ocean, and express the desire to have the Admiral or his brother Don Bartholomew present at the approaching deliberations of the joint commission which was to determine the limits of each nation's rights. In any event the Admiral was to send them a full discussion of the whole subject from his point of view, together with his own suggestions as to the proper line of demarcation and such maps as he should consider useful.

Unmistakably cordial as was the whole tenor of this letter, Ferdinand and Isabella were not contented to limit their expressions of support to the letters written to the Admiral in person. Torres was also entrusted with a royal

<sup>1</sup> The King was evidently thinking of the frequent mention made by Marco Polo of the superior quality of falcons found in Asia.



rescript or proclamation addressed to the "Knights, squires, officials, gentlemen, and all others of whatever degree or condition you may be, who, by our orders have gone, are going, or hereafter may go" to the Indies, enjoining them under heavy penalties to "do and fulfil everything which our Viceroy and Governor shall order or deem necessary for our service." The effect of this document was naturally to strengthen the Admiral's hands, even among those who were inclined to sympathize rather with Bernal de Pisa, Boil, and Margarite than with him. Those who were loyal gathered new courage from this palpable evidence of their sovereigns' satisfaction and support, while the new men who had come out with Torres saw in it a sufficient answer to the criticisms which they were sure to hear of the Admiral's relations to the King and Queen. Whatever might be the danger threatening from without, Columbus felt that he might count upon at least a season of peace within the colony.

As the voyage to Cuba and Jamaica marked a distinct epoch in the Admiral's career of discovery, so did the arrival of this budget of royal approvals and commendations mark a corresponding phase in the history of his connection with Ferdinand and Isabella. He had to report to them a vast extension of their new domains, with the certainty of still wider dominion, and had received from them their last expression of frank, spontaneous, and unqualified confidence and countenance. The long, bitter struggle with his enemies for the royal favor, which ended only on his deathbed, had begun.





## XI.

### THE PENALTY OF DEFEAT.

AS we follow the Admiral along the southern shores of Cuba, Jamaica, and Hayti, on the cruise which was just finished, we find the engaging scenes of his first experiences among the Bahamas repeated at almost every beach and bay where native villages were found. Swarms of delighted and friendly Indians, flotillas of welcoming canoes, hospitable offerings of food and fruits, marked the progress of the Spanish ships as they slowly sailed from one headland to another. Although to most, if not all, on board the caravels the novelty of such a reception had long worn off and its constant repetition savored of tameness, the Spaniards met the natives in the same spirit of cordiality and left them far more enriched, in their own conception, than they were before the white men's treasures of beads and bells had been distributed. In all this time we find no trace of impatience, contempt, or harshness in the Admiral's treatment of the islanders. What they offered was received with appreciation and paid for, in the donors' estimation, with overwhelming generosity. No injustice was done them, no advantage taken of their ignorance and weakness. His references to them are kindly and indulgent, and his two correspondents,—the Cura de los Palacios and Peter Martyr,—who have transmitted to us his familiar opinions concerning those islands and their peoples, uniformly preserve the same tone of sympathetic friendliness. There was, therefore, no difference between the benevolent sentiments he cherished

toward the Indians at the time of the Discovery and those which he exhibited during this second voyage,—as there was none in the voyages which succeeded. Where the natives were peaceably disposed and met him in a spirit of frankness and confidence, he was quick to respond in a similar strain. There is absolutely nothing in the record to justify an honest doubt, that in pursuing this humane course, his ideas of policy coincided with his personal inclinations.

But where he was received with menaces and brandished weapons, he opposed arms to arms; where the cannibals threatened the permanency of his projected settlements and the anatomical integrity of his settlers, he treated them as natural foes; where his men were slaughtered and his colony endangered, he looked upon his savage adversaries as Miles Standish did upon the pagan disturbers of the Puritan peace. What were the merits of the several issues is not the question. Doubtless there were as flagrant cases of injustice in the Indian affairs of Hispaniola in 1494 as there were in those of the United States centuries afterward. We cannot deny the academical correctness of the plea that the aborigines were entitled to resist the invasion of their sierras and savannahs, and repel, if they could, the Europeans *vi et armis*. Las Casas urged that point as eloquently and logically in the time of Columbus as Mrs. Jackson, or Mr. Welsh, or any of the devoted friends of the redman, have done and are doing in our own day,—and with just about the same measure of success. Columbus did not go as far in his classification of Indians good and bad as have some of our own bravest soldiers, for he was contented to believe that an Indian was safely disposed of when he was made a slave; but there was no shadow of turning in his emphatic conviction that a bow was to be met with an arquebuse and an assegai with a lance. Fighting was not even an accomplishment in those days to a man of active life: it was a necessity of his existence. Battle, murder, and sudden death were good things to be delivered from, no doubt, but the chance of escaping them was small for most adult litanists of the stronger sex. To their credit be it said, that they fought cheerfully and manfully on all

occasions, whether evenly matched, outnumbered, or outnumbering; they did not wait to make their reputation by some easy conquest of a weakling foe. But the feebleness of their adversary did not deter them; if he chose to withstand them, on his head be the pains. If the scene was laid in Europe and he was Italian, French, or Fleming who opposed the Spanish arms, he was good for a ransom if taken alive; while, if killed, he was an enemy the less. If, on other fields, he was Moor of Granada or Barbary, Guanché of the Canaries, or black savage of the Guinea coast, he was his captor's property, or that of the Crown, and worth what he might bring in the nearest mart. Therefore, after doing a reasonable amount of killing, the Spanish soldier was wont to withhold his hand and devote himself to the acquisition of locomotive plunder. Nothing can be said in defence of such a code; it was as bad as bad can be. We accomplish the same laudable ends now by far less ostentatious means. But in the times of which we write, as every schoolboy knows, such was the code of every nation in Europe; and to brand Columbus, as some do, as "the originator of American slavery" because he did not introduce a different style of warfare into the New World, is only a captious method of saying that the natives of Hispaniola, with whom he and his companions fought, *were* natives of the recently discovered western islands and not of Europe, Asia, or Africa. To this purely military aspect of the subject must be added the religious. Columbus was a devoted — it is easy for us Protestants to say a bigoted — son of the Church. Its law was his duty; its honor, his pride. Those who raised their weapons against the holy symbol of his faith — and he sailed, marched, and fought beneath the Green Cross — or against those who brought salvation to the Gentiles, were Anathema, — the lawful spoil of Christians, who conferred an everlasting boon upon them by saving their souls at the trifling expense of their bodies' pain. Nothing is easier than to scoff at this feeling now, dub it hypocrisy, taunt Columbus with finding it a convenient cloak for his alleged schemes of avarice. But it is a fact, little as we may share the senti-

ment, and as such cannot be laughed out of court. We are not living in the fifteenth century, it is well to remember, nor are we Columbuses.

This radical distinction, between those natives who received the Spaniards amicably and accepted their tutelage, and those who resented their coming and sought to compel their withdrawal, is the key to the apparent inconsistency of the Admiral's treatment of the Indians. Both in the past and in the future he treated those who met him peaceably with justice and consideration; but those who opposed him he met sword in hand, as he had faced Moors, Venetians, French, and Portuguese in the stormy years of his youth. Even on his first voyage, he had frankly recommended such a policy as the only one compatible with safety and success. The power of Spain and the honor of the Church must be upheld at all costs. This is why he did not reprove his men for the blood they shed in Samaná Bay, when on their way to Spain from the Discovery; why he looked upon the punishment of the Caribs as obligatory; why he considered it imperative to capture Caonabo, the destroyer of the garrison at Navidad; why he met the menaces of the Jamaicans and Higüeyans with counter demonstrations; and why, since his return to Isabella, he had sent Hojeda and his other captains on devastating raids through the surrounding country. What was wise policy in a time of peace was criminal weakness in a season of war. Those who were his friends among the natives, he rewarded; those who were his enemies, he sought to punish. The ethical objections are obvious but not relevant. The practical flaw in his system, viewing it from the moral level of his day, was that he could not impose upon his deputies and subordinates a like discrimination to that which he himself exercised. In the absence of such a distinction, all the natives came to be looked upon as legitimate prey by the Spaniards.

The fact that, with the exception of Guarionex and Guacanagari, all the caciques of the island were banded together to destroy the Europeans was, in the Admiral's estimation, ample justification for proceeding against them with all the

rigors of an offensive war. Self-preservation was added to the other motives which influenced his conduct towards the Haytians, and what he had in contemplation he proposed to do thoroughly. His malady did not yet permit him to take an active part in the preparations, but he directed them with his wonted care, and felt no doubt as to the results of the campaign he was planning, notwithstanding the overwhelming superiority of the natives in number. Only two years had passed since he and all his companions were thrown, wellnigh defenceless, upon the shores near Navidad and succored with such rare hospitality and magnanimity by some of these very islanders. If, in that short time, the white men had so far antagonized the natives that the former were now threatened with actual extermination, the causes of the evil lay in something deeper than any fancied callousness of the Admiral toward the people whose amiable guilelessness he had so often vaunted. The root of the trouble was, undoubtedly, the excesses and cruelties committed by the worthless rabble which constituted so large a proportion of colonists, and the disorganization which made possible the continuance of such dangerous license. As Viceroy and the commander-in-chief of the soldiery, Columbus was, of course, responsible for this condition of affairs, and it would be useless to attempt to relieve him of the consequences. At the same time, it is only just to bear in mind that on leaving the colony and starting upon his Cuban cruise, at what the event proved to be a hazardous season, he was fulfilling the repeated injunctions of his sovereigns to settle the problem of Cuba's geography at the earliest practicable moment. He was detained on that voyage by untoward circumstances, and, upon his return, was incapacitated from active exertions for five months by an illness which repeatedly menaced his life. Opposed to him, in secret and overtly, was a strong faction of Crown-appointed officials who possessed, and were known to possess, the confidence and — as in the case of Margarite, Boil, and Bernal de Pisa — the friendship of the King and Queen. If we duly weigh these circumstances, we shall find that the responsibility of Columbus was not properly of



his own making, and that in pursuing a policy of repression and punishment he was acting in the one manner consistent with the interests of his charge in the conditions which he found existing. The problem immediately confronting him was not how to establish and maintain a just and righteous code of procedure towards the natives, but how to preserve his colony from destruction and uphold the authority of the Spanish Crown in the New World. In deciding it he adopted the only argument which his experience or that of his contemporaries had found efficacious,—a vigorously conducted military campaign. The history of the relations of white men and Indians in the western hemisphere does not suggest that there was any alternative. The Spaniards were surrounded on all sides by a numerous, united, and not despicable foe. To attempt to treat with such a horde of savages was as futile then as it would be now. No course was open except to reduce them to submission before trusting to any parleys. Columbus followed the same reasoning that we have ourselves consistently pursued in our alleged Indian policy, and committed the same error afterwards as we have,—of not enforcing a just and humane treatment of the conquered tribes. That is the true extent of his fault. To charge him with indiscriminate cruelty is to falsify history.

Before the Admiral was ready to take the field, he despatched Antonio de Torres back to Spain with the four ships in which he had come out. As on his former voyage, this officer took with him a budget of letters, reports,<sup>1</sup> and memorials from Columbus to his sovereigns, but the Admiral did not trust to these alone. The defection of Boil and Margarite, the result of his Cuban cruise, and the present dangerous crisis in the colony's affairs demanded

<sup>1</sup> Herrera summarizes (Lib. I. Cap. III. of the 1st Decade) a long and minute description of the island of Hayti forwarded by Columbus to Ferdinand and Isabella at the time. It is full of interesting detail, and has been reproduced by Irving and other historians; but its authorship has escaped their notice. In the same budget was the Admiral's *parecer*, or opinion, concerning the relative geographical rights of Spain and Portugal under the Papal Bull.

that their Majesties should have a full knowledge of all that had happened from a source certain to do justice to Columbus. The latter accordingly deputed his brother, Don Diego, to accompany Torres and represent the Admiral's interests before the King and Queen. By his hands were sent such commodities, curiosities, and valuables as had been collected since the departure of the last squadron in August. Of gold there was little to be sent, for the disturbed condition of the country had put an end to all systematic mining and washing. But the fleet was laden with a cargo which would excite almost as much interest and satisfaction in Cadiz and Seville as though it brought a goodly heap of yellow ingots for the mint. Five hundred of the Indians captured in the expedition against Guatiguanà, and the other raids into the interior, were crowded on the caravels, consigned to the godly Bishop of Badajoz, Juan de Fonseca, as a welcome remittance from the colony at Isabella. It is shocking enough to read of, and our own laws were right in making it a capital offence; but it was the custom of the day in 1494. Moors, Canary Islanders, and negroes were imported in droves and sold freely in the Spanish markets, and the addition of a new brand of human goods to the current supply was received with no other objection than that it tended to depress prices. There is a pretty story to the effect that Queen Isabella resented this appropriation of her new "vassals" and angrily exclaimed against the Admiral's presumption in so dealing with them. But a careful study of the records discloses that her anger was directed against the man himself and not his act; for the King and Queen freely condoned, if they did not frankly permit, the enslavement of the natives for several years after this first shipment. They feigned to discriminate between captives taken in arms and peaceable Indians wrongfully kidnapped, but they did not scruple to cover all the proceeds into the royal coffers. Judged from our point of view,—as improved within the last twenty-five years,—the whole business was atrocious. But we might as logically inveigh against the Spaniards of the fifteenth century for not maintaining a system of public schools as for trading in slaves. We need

not go back very far to find ourselves in their place, if we desire to look at the matter from both sides.

By the beginning of March the Admiral was well enough to put his plans into execution. He had collected a force of 200 infantry and twenty horsemen. Many of the number were more fitted for the convalescent hospital than for campaigning, but all who were strong enough to bear arms were pressed into the service. In addition to this force there were twenty bloodhounds, now for the first time introduced on the scene in western lands. These savage animals had been brought by Torres from the Canary Islands, where the breed had long been used in hunting down the natives. These particular ones were destined for service against the cannibals, when the Admiral should undertake his expedition among their islands; but they were too valuable an ally to be discarded by the feeble army. Guacanagari, with some of his tribesmen, also accompanied the Spanish column, and may have been of some assistance in the commissariat; neither he nor his people were fighters. The town was left in care of the invalids and artisans, who were considered a sufficient guard when aided by the artillery and defences of the fort. The Admiral, in fact, had not to cut loose from this base, for the enemy was gathered in force in the nearest part of the Vega Real, only two short marches from Isabella. At the most, the Spaniards had only to advance thirty miles from the town to reach the native host. Committing the blunder which has been perpetrated with such pathetic monotony by so many savage armies, the Indians had abandoned all the advantages of a position in the neighboring hills and had come down into the level savannah to meet their assured fate. How many there may have been is not even to be guessed. Las Casas says that some of the Spaniards alleged that there were more than 100,000. It is not improbable that there were one-fifth of the number, for the insurrection was general and the population of the island considerable.<sup>1</sup> They were, as to the majority, quite

<sup>1</sup> According to Las Casas, Columbus estimated the population at 1,100,000. The good Bishop thinks this referred to the province of Cibao alone.

naked; some of the tribes wore a kind of waistcloth. Their weapons were generally bows, light arrows of reeds tipped with bones of fish, or bits of turtle shell, spears of hard wood, with their ends hardened in the fire and sharpened, and flat two-edged wooden swords. Some of the mountaineers even retained the primitive arms of the stone age, — hatchets, maces, and flint-headed javelins. The Spaniards were well armed, if weak; they had both fire-arms and cross-bows, were in most cases protected by steel corselets and helmets, carried long, keen swords, and their mounted men had the heavy lances used to overthrow the mail-clad soldiery of Europe. The natives were commanded by one of Caonabo's brothers, who displayed a rude generalship in dividing his host into several columns, with the intent of encircling the petty force opposed to him. But the Spaniards did not await an assault. Moving against the nearest column, the infantry discharged their arquebuses and bows, while the little band of horsemen, led by Hojeda, plunged headlong into the naked crowd before it. The "battle" was over in a moment, and instead was to be seen nothing but swarms of fleeing Indians pursued by horse and foot and smitten down as fast as swords could fall and lances thrust. The leashes which held the bloodhounds were slipped, and the hungry animals sprang at limb or throat, leaping from one bare victim to another and inspiring almost as much terror among the distracted fugitives as did the awesome animals of larger size which were thundering at their heels. In a dozen directions across the plain the luckless Haytians streamed, seeking the shelter of neighboring woods and foot-hills, and after them followed infantry, cavalry, and dogs, killing and mangling to their savage content. After all, a couple of hundred men can only slaughter a limited number of their kind in a given number of hours, even when their quarry is defenceless. It takes an appreciable time to hew down or thrust through even a naked body and recover one's weapon for *da capo*; and there is, besides, the time consumed in chasing. In later years the Spanish *conquistadores* scientifically reduced the needful motions to a

minimum, thereby largely increasing the mortality among their adversaries and correspondingly diminishing their own fatigue; but in the affair of the *Vega Real* they were yet unskilled and would consequently weary the sooner. What the death-roll among the natives was has not been given; it is not likely that any one made a count. It could not have much exceeded a thousand. No one among the Spaniards seems to have been seriously hurt. As soon as the heat of the pursuit was over and the dispersion of the main bodies complete, the victors turned their attention to corraling the largest available number of their opponents for slaves, and the whole dreary business was finished.

It has not been often necessary to repeat an object-lesson of this kind among nations having as little inclination for war as the people of Hispaniola. The defeated confederates slunk to their several retreats and counted themselves fortunate if they were not quickly haled therefrom by some raiding-party from the Spanish forces. The authority of the native caciques was gone, the confidence of the tribes forever broken, the population scattered, their plantations and settlements deserted, and the whole economy of the central portion of the island fatally disorganized. The murders of two or three score Spaniards had been abundantly revenged, and the peace of hopeless subjection established throughout the land. It was the fortune of war, as war was considered then, — the natural and inevitable penalty attaching to defeat. The Spaniards would have expected a similar fate had they lost the day, and would have met with it.

The Admiral now divided his forces into numerous parties and sent them into the disaffected districts to complete the work of pacification, so called. Sending Don Bartholomew back to Isabella as governor, in his absence, he himself marched through the *Vega Real*, thence into Cibao, thence to Maguana, — the country of Caonabo, — and so, by a wide detour to the south and east, back to Isabella. This progress consumed many months; Las Casas says it lasted until the end of the year 1495. Concerning its incidents not a great deal remains. Those vil-

lages and districts which submitted to the Spanish authority were undisturbed; those which offered any opposition were harried with fire and sword. As is always the case, the subordinate officers were more royal than the King, and meted out punishment with scant regard either for justice or mercy. It is on record that the Admiral himself endeavored to temper what he believed to be the military exigencies of the situation with the exercise of a more humane policy. In some instances he met with organized resistance, notably from two brothers of Caonabo, who endeavored to avenge the rout of the Vega. The result was, of course, always the same, and the effort only increased the straits into which the natives had fallen. Many districts were abandoned at the approach of the Spaniards; into others they could not penetrate. In some, a certain amount of gold was collected; in others, large quantities of cotton, a little amber, the highly prized brazil-wood, and so on. The expedition, so far as the Admiral was concerned, was not entirely for retaliation and discipline; he wished to exhibit to the native population the power of the Spaniards, but he was equally desirous to complete his knowledge of the island and its productions. At the end of his long journey he was able to report to the King and Queen that the country was pacified, all resistance at an end, and the people disposed to accept the Spanish rule without opposition.

In token of their subjection he proposed to establish the payment of a tribute. This was adjusted to meet the supposed abilities of the several tribes. Each Indian, whether man or woman, between the ages of fourteen and forty, who lived in the vicinity of the mines or gold-bearing rivers of Cibao, the Vega Real, and Maguana, was to furnish every three months as much gold as a hawk's-bell would contain. The natives of the other reduced districts were to deliver within the same period, in lieu of gold, twenty-five pounds of raw cotton. As each Indian paid his quarterly tax, a metal token was to be given him as evidence of quittance for that instalment. If he could not produce such evidence, he was subject to "moderate" chastisement. Unfortunately, the text of the decree im-



posing this tax has not been preserved. We know little of it save its consequences, which were miserable in the last degree. Had we its terms to guide us, some light would be thrown upon a measure the unwisdom of which seems so patent that it is difficult to comprehend how any one should have adopted it. The object was, obviously enough, to replenish the royal coffers and make the large and absolutely idle native population contribute something in return for the benefits, spiritual and temporal, which the Spanish occupation was supposed to confer; for in the Admiral's day, as in ours, the untutored savage was assumed to be pining for a "civilization" whose first fruits were his own extermination. It was not singular that, with the evidences of gold so abundant on all sides and with the recollection of the freedom with which the natives bartered away considerable quantities of it, the Admiral should require them to collect in three months the amount they had cheerfully offered in exchange for the little bells which were now made the measure of value. What is strange is that he should have supposed whole tribes could support such a tax upon their strength for any length of time. They had no idea of continuous labor and knew nothing about gathering gold, for the most part. It was a common sight, after the impost was established, to see an Indian heaping up a pile of earth or gravel by the side of a brook, throwing water over it with his hands, and then searching painfully for the yellow grains to add to his little hoard. Both for "mining" and cotton-planting the only implement the native possessed was a pointed stick. Under such conditions, to expect every man and boy in a wide district to secure the stated quantity of gold or cotton was to ignore the intrinsic limitation of the case. It can only be explained by the theory that the Indians had literally nothing to do, and they themselves were the authority, ever since the first landing in Hispaniola in '92, that gold existed in vast quantities and could be "gathered in the hands." Before the first quarter-day arrived it was clear that there would be a general default in the payment of the tribute. Guarionex stated the case

fairly when he appealed to the Admiral for a mitigation of the tax. His people in the *Vega Real*, he said, knew nothing about gold or its gathering; it was absolutely impossible for them to make up the required amount. Let the Admiral permit them to pay the tax in corn, instead of gold, and he would gladly undertake to plant a belt of grain for the King of Spain which should extend right through the island, from Isabella to the south coast. At first the Admiral declined to listen to the representations made by Guarionex; he saw no reason why able-bodied men, as the natives certainly were, could not get together in three months the small quantity of gold which he had demanded. After much argument and entreaty, he yielded to the accumulating evidence in support of the cacique's position and reduced the tribute by one-half; thereafter, only the contents of half a hawk's-bell were required. This measure implied, of course, a vast relief to the Indians; but even at the diminished rate they did not meet the demands of the tribute. In some of the richer districts the tax was paid, as in certain of the more fertile ones the requisite amount of cotton was forthcoming; but in general only a feeble response was made. Whether, if the impost had been reduce to a tenth, or even less, the indolent and labor-hating Indians would have done any better is very doubtful. They did not know how to work, and either could not or would not learn. The whole theory of the tribute was as impolitic as it was unjust, and it had no chance of success. As the failure in the payments became first general and then permanent, the Admiral appointed officials to visit the several districts and endeavor to secure their collection. This was, in substance, handing over the natives to be dealt with as the character of the collector might dictate. The Admiral's instructions were explicit and emphatic that justice and kindness were to be shown in all transactions with the delinquents, as the object was to secure the largest revenues for the Crown, not to chastise the peaceable Indians. The recent behavior of Margarite and his men when sent among the friendly tribes, and the remembrance of the tyrannical performances of the garrison of Navidad, should have been enough to cause him

to hesitate before placing the lives of the defenceless Haytians in the hands of his rude and ignorant followers. No doubt he assumed that he could control his agents; but this was the one thing which he did less successfully than another. The inevitable result was that in many cases the collectors of the tribute became persecutors, and much cruelty and extortion were inflicted on the unfortunate taxpayers. The natives learned to dread the sight of a Spaniard in many districts and to flee to the mountains and woods at their approach. This exposed them to the convenient charge of resistance, and that meant violence, captivity, or death, according to the disposition of the collector. With only the choice between a life of what to them was intolerable effort, and the loss of life or liberty, the Indians gradually abandoned all hope of satisfying their new lords and forsook *en masse* their homes and plantations, preferring a precarious but free life among the sierras to the hardships of the white men's rule. At first, the more ignorant among them hoped that such a course would cause the Spaniards to despair of ever getting enough of the coveted gold to make it worth their while continuing the effort, and that sooner or later they would take to their ships and sail away as suddenly as they had come. But work continued at Isabella, two new forts were commenced in the Vega, the Admiral pursued his journey through the central provinces, and his officers with their parties persistently invaded district after district in their inquisition after the tribute; so that in time the natives learned that their sacrifices availed nothing and that the strangers were a fixture in the land. The very general cessation of planting and sowing did inflict upon the Spaniards no small distress and embarrassment, and when the revenue chasers entered the mountain country they had often to make shift with roots and wild fruits, as did the disheartened people whom they were tracking down; but, in the long run, the real suffering fell upon the Indians themselves. It was no mere boast, that in which one of the Spaniards indulged, when he said of his countrymen, "the hungrier they are the more tenacious they are, and the more disposed to suffer

and to make suffer." It was the creed of the *conquistador* epitomized.

To Columbus the situation was one of profound discouragement, little less in degree than that which confronted him upon his return from Cuba. He had put down the insurrection among the natives at the price of widespread devastation and a distrust beyond all remedy. Foiled in his plans for a systematic and legitimate working of the gold-bearing rocks and gravels, he had endeavored to ensure its equivalent to the royal treasury by the imposition of a tribute which the universal customs of war recognized as fit and commendable. This effort likewise promised to be futile and to involve him in a policy of severity and persecution little in consonance with the relations he had expected to maintain with the natives. The failure of both these plans for raising revenue accentuated the peril in which, as he fully realized, his credit with Ferdinand and Isabella was involved. The outlays in connection with the colony had been enormous, the returns pitifully small. So far from being even self-supporting, the intrigues and demoralization at Isabella had prevented any methodical execution of his really far-seeing projects, while disease had more than decimated his followers and left the survivors all but incapacitated for any useful work. All this, he knew, was at this very time being iterated and reiterated to the King and Queen by men who had their confidence, and who hated him with all the malice of arrogance rebuked and pride offended, added to the contempt of race and caste. In the justice of their Majesties and the loyalty of his own good friends he had unshaken confidence, but the censures and insinuations of his enemies derive their best support from the very condition of affairs which he saw confronting him. Instead of the evangelization of the natives upon which so much stress had been laid, here were destruction and war; instead of a steady stream of gold, a constant requisition for new expense; instead of a flourishing, united, and successful colony, a long record of disaster and discord. There remained only the "slave trade," of which we have heard so much; but Columbus was too familiar with arithmetic and the

resources of Hispaniola to imagine that he was going to be able to obtain a hundred thousand slaves there, or, if he did so, dispose of any such number in Spain, or in all Europe, and thus amortize the costs of colonizing this one island. A few cargoes of captured Indians would help matters financially, ecclesiastically, and politically,—for what other disposition was to be made of such prisoners of war?—but they were merely an item, not a basis, of revenue. In his own heart, dark as was the present outlook, there was room neither for doubt nor fear as to the ultimate future of his whole gigantic enterprise. Reap the reward who might, he knew the end must be success. With the vast panorama of his voyages through the Caribs' Islands, along the Cuban shores, past the long coasts of Jamaica and Hispaniola, clearly pictured in his mind, he, at least, realized what their Majesties of Spain had received in exchange for their ducats and maravedies. With his fund of accumulated knowledge and information, he held with abiding confidence to the faith that far greater returns were yet in store for them. The present confusion and partial frustration of his and their anticipations was not fairly chargeable to him. He had been brought into it in a swoon and left to fight his way out as best he could. Before long, the island would settle down, a revenue be assured by peaceful means, and he be at liberty to satisfy his sovereigns that this western world held more than islands,—vast, fertile, and wealth-abounding as these were. Until then, he should pursue his way with unabated energy and act as to him seemed best for the interests of the King and Queen whose deputy he was. However little we may agree with some of his methods, no one can fail to respect the undaunted courage and inalterable faith of this sore-tried sailor-Viceroy.

Meantime, matters were shaping themselves evilly for him in Spain. Boil and Margarite reached Cadiz at the end of November, '94, a few weeks after Torres had sailed for Isabella. They lost no time in presenting themselves before the King and Queen at Madrid and unfolding their budget of grievances. According to them, the whole enterprise of the Indies was a delusion and a snare, invented and

sustained by Columbus for his own aggrandizement. There was no gold worth the trouble of gathering, no spices worth the curing, no products which would repay the cost of collection. The climate was deadly, and the inhabitants naked barbarians. The colony was badly situated and worse governed. The foreign parvenu whom the sovereigns had placed as Viceroy over so many of their noble and spirited subjects had outraged the pride and dignity of gentlemen by compelling them to work like common hinds and accept a scanty dole of wretched fare. Not satisfied with humiliating his superiors in the social scale, he had impiously obliged the clergy to live on short commons like their half-starved flock. When hidalgos and priests alike resented such coarse measures, he, or his brother in his absence, had cut down their rations still farther, imprisoned some of the critics, and punished others yet more severely. His brothers were more insupportable than himself, because less entitled to recognition for their achievements. The Viceroy had sailed away, leaving his powers in the hands of Don Diego, who had thereupon attempted to lord it still more offensively over the unhappy Castilians. Where the Viceroy himself had gone, no one knew; it was more than doubtful whether he should ever be seen again. The relators had borne this wretched condition of affairs as long as they could, and had at last felt that their duty to their sovereigns demanded that they return to Spain and lay the truth of the whole matter before their Majesties. Whatever might be the outcome, this at least was certain,—the Crown would never receive any return from these new lands commensurate with the sacrifices it had cost to secure them and those which would be needful to retain them. The vaunted Indies were neither more nor less than a yawning pit for the royal treasure, and a certain grave for the loyal servants of the Crown. Supported as they were by the stories of their fellow-malcontents who had returned with them, and by the letters and depositions of those who had not been able to leave Isabella, the representations of these influential placemen had no little weight with Ferdinand and Isabella. An active intrigue was set on foot against Columbus, backed



with all the ingenuity of envy and disappointed ambition; and for some time it seemed destined to success. If their Majesties were not moved to act immediately in the direction desired by Boil and Margarite, they at least went so far as to seriously consider the wisdom of some such step. No doubt the violence of the Admiral's accusers somewhat detracted from the credibility of their assertions, and there was, moreover, a certain amount of evidence in his favor received by the same vessels, including a remittance of gold in dust and nuggets of sufficient importance to warrant its coinage and use in buying fresh supplies for Isabella. But when the new year opened, and the weeks went by without any further word from beyond the seas of Viceroy or colonists, the King and Queen began to fear that the worst had happened to both, and ordered the early departure of four caravels which were to bear ample provisions and supplies, in accordance with the Admiral's own former requisitions, and on which was to go a commissioner empowered to investigate the charges made by Boil and his friends and make a report upon the condition of affairs in general. This squadron was to sail in March and was to be followed by four other caravels in May or June. In pursuance again of the Admiral's suggestions, a contract was entered into (with Juanoto Berardi, Vespucci's employer) for furnishing twelve vessels in all, as they might be required, at a fixed rate per ton; and Fonseca was directed to hasten the despatch of the first four. The reason alleged by their Majesties for this urgency, in writing to him, was "because we somewhat fear that God has disposed of the Admiral of the Indies on the voyage which he undertook, as so long a time has passed since we heard anything from him." The real motive lay probably in the next sentence,— "We have therefore decided to send out Commander Diego Carrillo and another personage of confidence, who shall provide for everything out there if the Admiral be absent, and even if he is present shall remedy those matters which it is desirable to remedy, according to the information we have had from those who have arrived from there." Carrillo was to go out with the second squadron; the "other personage,"

who was to go on the vessels now preparing for sea, was left at first to Fonseca's choice, but before he had exercised it their Majesties wrote again and directed him to appoint Juan de Aguado to the position of captain of the little fleet and royal commissioner. This worthy, it will be remembered, had sailed with the Admiral on the voyage of colonization in '93, and returned with Torres, who was especially charged by Columbus in his Memorial to recommend Aguado to the sovereigns for having "well and diligently served in everything he had been ordered to do." There is no reason to believe that Ferdinand and Isabella chose the man for this post because he had become an intriguer against his commander; but it is not easy to see how any loyal subordinate could have accepted the task, now given to Aguado, of investigating that commander's actions. Probably he was merely one of those invertebrate entities whose only chance of elevation is over their prostrate benefactors. At all events, he accepted the task of acting as spy against Columbus and rendered invaluable assistance to the cabal laboring for his humiliation.

The instructions given by their Majesties concerning this mission, in the letter to Fonseca already quoted, well portray the confusion of mind in which they were involved by reason of their desire to believe in their Admiral and in Boil at the same time. As we have seen, if Columbus were absent from the colony, Aguado was to take charge of everything; if the Admiral were present, the commissioner was to "remedy" what was out of sorts. He was to hear the complaints which were made by each side against the other, inform himself minutely of the true position of affairs in the colony,— "how it is governed and what reforms are necessary; at whose door lies the blame for whatever wrong has been done or is doing there,"— and then return to Spain and make a report of all that he had learned. Some sense was shown in forbidding any one of the malcontents from returning with Aguado to Hispaniola and so stirring up more mischief, and an appearance of impartiality, in ordering him to inquire also how these ex-officials had discharged their duties. But the utter folly of

the whole commission, as an administrative measure, was displayed in the authority given to Aguado to ignore the Admiral. He was to have charge of all the provisions and supplies with which the caravels were laden, and was to "divide them in the presence of the Admiral, should he be there, and if not, before those who may be present." Finally, he was to be instructed by Fonseca, "that he must act in strict conformity with these directions,—but if he should find the Admiral [in the colony] he was to be under his authority in all things"! Here was a rare opportunity for a meddlesome and conceited courtier to put a too successful newcomer in his right place. If the Admiral should point to one phrase as limiting Aguado's powers, the latter could retort by showing another clause making him entirely independent of the Admiral. The commission was a striking example of the vacillation exhibited by Ferdinand and Isabella in their attitude toward Columbus and of their seemingly uncontrollable propensity to interfere, at every stage, in the direction of affairs falling specifically within his official jurisdiction. He was not gifted with great executive ability at best, but had he been less loyal to his sovereigns' commands, and more independent, he would probably have succeeded better. As it was, no viceroy could have been successful in the face of the persistent and disconcerting intervention of the King and Queen.

The preparations for the despatch of Aguado were actively proceeding when Antonio de Torres arrived, on April 10th, with his four slave-laden vessels. His coming caused a marked revolution in the sentiments of Ferdinand and Isabella. He brought despatches from the Admiral announcing the safe completion of his voyage to Cuba and Jamaica, and of the supposed identification of the former with the Asiatic continent. His own testimony to the position of affairs at Isabella was favorable to the Admiral, and, besides, he was accompanied by Don Diego, who was prepared to champion his brother's cause with a complete knowledge of all the facts distorted by Boil and Margarite. True, the latter's faction received an important accession in the person of Bernal de Pisa, but this dignitary returned in

disgrace, sent home by the Admiral at their Majesties' express commandment. Moreover, Torres brought a tangible earnest of the colony's productiveness in the gold, copper, brazil and other dye-woods, cotton and other commodities which his ships contained. As for the slaves, they were so much ready money, and were accepted as such by the sovereigns. It is almost amusing, in view of the efforts which have been made to contrast the cruelty of Columbus with the enlightened humanity of Ferdinand and Isabella, to find the latter, in the same letter in which they acknowledge the news of Torres's arrival, saying to Fonseca that "it seems to us that the Indians can be sold to better advantage there in Andalusia than anywhere else: do you have them sold as to you may seem best."<sup>1</sup> The effect of this opportune arrival was distinctly favorable to Columbus. The very fact that he was alive and back at his post deprived his adversaries of their chief argument. The equipment of Aguado's squadron was not suspended, for the reports brought by Torres only confirmed the urgent need of supplies for Isabella; but the King and Queen evidently leaned again more towards the Admiral's side than that of his detractors, and insisted upon the officers of the Crown respecting his authority and wishes. Fonseca wished to lay claim to some gold brought by Don Diego, as his personal property, and also refused to honor the demand of the Admiral's agent for the one-eighth part of the gold and slaves brought by Torres; but their Majesties very emphatically directed him to permit Don Diego to keep his gold and Juanoto to draw out the full share to which Columbus was entitled under his agreement with the Crown. Fonseca was evidently bent on putting difficulties in the way of reinforcing the Admiral's exchequer, for it took no less than

<sup>1</sup> It is true that a few days later they ordered Fonseca not to deliver any of these Indians to their buyers until their Majesties had an opportunity to learn, in discharge of their delicate consciences, from the Admiral's letters, whether the captives were taken in war or kidnapped; but Fonseca was to take care that the intending purchasers "do not know anything of this." Columbus at least had the courage of his convictions, and made no secret of his actions. The Indians were duly sold, we may add, and some sent to man the galleys.

four letters from the sovereigns to secure his final obedience. He gained little by the obstruction, however, for in one of them his royal master and mistress added a command which must have been peculiarly distasteful to the sulky bishop. "By those who go out in the caravels now loading," they wrote him, "you must write to the Admiral all that you think needful to remove whatever disagreement he may have with you, and you must try to learn from those who have just arrived from the Indies what you ought to do in order to satisfy him, so that everything may be smoothed over by you, and do what is necessary." Clearly the pendulum of royal favor had temporarily swung over to the Admiral's side. The timely return of Torres with his reports and cargoes had given the lie direct to the most serious accusations of Boil and his partisans, and what remained of their allegations might safely be set down as malicious exaggeration. If, while ordering Fonseca to do all that he could to conciliate Columbus, the King and Queen had likewise directed the issue of revised instructions to Aguado, much of the future trouble might have been avoided. As it was, the commissioner took out his original ambiguous credentials, and the Admiral found himself confronted with these at the same time that he received an apparently sincere commendation of his course from their Majesties direct. If this was royal diplomacy, intended to discredit their Viceroy in fact while seeming to sustain him, it was of an extremely low order; if it was negligence, it is difficult to conceive how it was possible.





## XII.

### INVESTIGATION AND VINDICATION.

A GUADO did not leave Spain with his four caravels until August. There were delays in chartering the vessels and in loading them, and the King and Queen were too much preoccupied with the affairs of their kingdoms to give any prolonged consideration to the fitting out of a few ships for their Indian colony. They had promptly issued the necessary orders and the rest was in Fonseca's hands. Perhaps the delay which ensued was unavoidable, but it is doing no injustice to the reputation of the worthy prelate having the matter in charge to suggest that he found it agreeable to hold back as long as practicable the supplies intended for the Admiral. On the 2nd of June, Ferdinand and Isabella wrote him to take whatever vessels he could find, "so that they may not be delayed a single hour," and two months thereafter they were ready to sail. They took out a widely assorted cargo, in compliance with the Admiral's requisitions. Large quantities of provision — wheat, barley, bacon, salt-fish, biscuit, figs, sugar, rice, almonds, wine, oil, and vinegar — were taken; mares, asses, calves, sheep, chickens, swine, and rabbits for breeding; canvas, cotton, pitch, tallow, and oakum for shipbuilding; rice, barley, seeds, and cuttings for planting, and a huge store of lesser articles of comfort or necessity. The losses which had occurred among the more useful class of colonists by death or sickness were supplied by new men. Field laborers, a master millwright, a master armorer, mining experts and laborers, a physician, a surgeon, an apothecary, some



coopers, a horseshoer, several fishermen with their boats, and artisans of all the trades already represented at Isabella were sent out, to allow the return of those who desired to leave the colony. Finally, more dogs — bulldogs and mastiffs — were also sent, “to protect the supplies and for the security of the people,” — an indication that the importation of these animals was not necessarily due to cruelty. The list which was prepared by Columbus shows a well-conceived and thorough plan for rendering the colony self-supporting, and a careful attention to details. Had Ferdinand and Isabella been content to let the fleet sail with its helpful lading of men and supplies, and left their Viceroy to work out his own projects with the aid thus opportunely afforded, the past disasters would have been in great part remedied and those of the future wholly avoided.

Instead, Aguado, in addition to the confused instructions to which we have already referred, carried with him this enigmatical mandate: —

“To the knights, squires, and other persons who are by our orders in the Indies. We are sending out yonder Juan Aguado, our gentleman-in-waiting, who will speak with you on our behalf. We command you to give him faith and credence. Madrid, the 9th of April, 1495. I, the King. I, the Queen.”

He bore other letters from their Majesties to individuals at Isabella, and also several to the Admiral himself. Two of these latter have been preserved. They are dated June 1st, seven weeks later than the extraordinary powers conferred on Aguado, and, while dry and abrupt, do not intimate that the Viceroy's authority had been superseded. It may have been of no especial significance that in them Columbus was addressed merely as “our Admiral of the Ocean Sea,” without his joint title of Viceroy of the Indies, but with such a monarch as Ferdinand the omission was not likely to be accidental. In the first of these communications the Admiral was told to permit as many of the colonists to return to Spain as desired to do so, and to reduce the total number retained in Hispaniola to 500, “because it seems to us that there are a great many people out there who are drawing salaries,

and it is a great expense and trouble to send out provisions." As fast as newcomers arrived from Spain a corresponding number of the earlier settlers were to be sent back, so as to keep the population of the colony always at the figure stated. In the second missive their Majesties touched upon the burning question of the curtailment of rations, out of which the malcontents made so much capital. "We have been informed," they wrote, "that in the past, especially while you were absent from Hispaniola, the provisions were not divided among the people who were there, and those who yet remain, as they should have been, and that for whatever offence any one of them committed the ration was withdrawn, by which many of them were placed in peril." The Admiral was therefore instructed to apportion the provisions, in the future, in strict accordance with a list prepared by Fonseca, which accompanied the letter, whereby each colonist was to receive his share every fortnight. Under no circumstances were these rations to be diminished to or withdrawn from any one, "unless the offences should be such as to merit the pain of death, for the withholding of the provisions from any one is equal to this penalty." If this rebuke was somewhat softened by the allusion to the Admiral's absence, it was none the less a victory for his adversaries; and its promulgation in the colony, when coupled with the mysterious discretion entrusted to Aguado, was sure to be received as an abatement of the Admiral's authority. The whole episode is clouded and confused; one fact only is incontestable,—that no governor or viceroy could possibly achieve a measure of success when subjected to such humiliating and perplexing interferences. The sequel proves that it was not the intention of Ferdinand and Isabella to subject Columbus to the exasperating indignities which flowed from their ill-digested orders; but a conflict of jurisdiction was inevitable unless their commissioner was a man of rare sagacity and self-control, and in this case he possessed neither of these qualities. To a person filled with a sense of his own importance, and bent upon asserting it in frank opposition to the already constituted authority, the opportunity for mischief was unlimited.

Aguado reached Isabella in October, and Don Diego with him. Columbus was then in Maguana, carrying on operations against the brothers of Caonabo, who had again attempted to revenge themselves upon the Spanish intruders. When the commissioner arrived he lost no time in asserting publicly that he held certain broad and supreme powers from the Crown. He imprisoned several members of the crew which had brought him over, for some alleged lack of reverence or obedience, endeavored to interpose in matters of colonial government, and made little case of Don Bartholomew and the town council. The absence of the Admiral was a sore affliction to Aguado, for he could not officially proclaim his own authority and institute his intended "reforms" until the royal letters had been delivered. He therefore proposed to go in search of Columbus, with a view of more quickly assuming the jurisdiction with which he fancied himself clothed. Gathering together a small force of horse and foot, he started out for Maguana. As in Isabella he had originated, or permitted, the rumor that he had come to supplant Columbus, so now, as his party crossed the Vega Real in the direction of Maguana, they spread broadcast the report that "a new Admiral" had come to take the place of the "old Admiral." The consequence was, naturally, to induce nine out of ten among the hearers to look upon Columbus as deprived of his rank, and to foster all kinds of hopes among Europeans and natives alike.

Don Bartholomew meantime had despatched messengers to his brother, informing him of the new complications, and the Admiral responded by making a hurried march to Isabella. Advised of his coming, Aguado retraced the road to the town and there met his former commander and endorser. When he proffered the royal letters and credentials, Columbus declined to receive them unless in public and with the ceremony befitting the arrival of a commission from the Crown. The little army was drawn up in the plaza, all the officials and colonists then in the town were present in gala costume, the trumpets were sounded, and, with such state as he could muster, the Viceroy re-

ceived the commissioner. When the documents were presented, he accepted them in dignified silence and retired to read those which had not been read aloud to the assemblage. All this was formally set forth in the *acta* prepared at the time by the royal notaries, but, notwithstanding such official testimony, Aguado afterwards claimed that Columbus had acted with studied disrespect and indifference towards the bearer of the royal commands. This was merely the beginning of a long train of vulgar and ostentatious arrogance. Interpreting his contradictory instructions to suit his own aims, and appealing to the singular letters of credence which had been proclaimed by the Admiral himself, Aguado pursued a course of intrigue, misrepresentation, and usurpation which had for its avowed object the destruction of the last vestige of the Admiral's authority and prerogatives. It requires no great familiarity with the conditions prevailing in a remote colony, composed of such elements as was that of Isabella, to comprehend the effects of his actions. The old king was dead; with the new one were the keys of the money-chest and storehouses, and the gift of places. Under the Admiral's government the colonists had been hungry, hard-worked, and severely disciplined; under the beneficent commissioner they were comparatively well-fed, relieved from their labors, and permitted to do pretty much as they pleased. They ignored the fact that the very provisions they were eating had been sent out in compliance with their own governor's far-sighted requisitions, that their tasks had been essential to their own safety, and that the former scarcity of food was directly traceable to their own excesses and insubordination. All they cared to know was that there were meat, biscuit, and wine to be had, and that work on mills, roads, fort, and government house was at an end. In like manner, the Indians recovered boldness and energy. The Guamiquina, or "Almirante," as they had learned from the Spaniards to call him, was dethroned, and they believed they had less cause to fear the new chief. Several of the more daring caciques banded together again and revived the insurrectionary spirit, refusing to pay tribute and renewing

their hopes of sooner or later casting the white men from their shores. Had the issue depended upon the King's ex-gentleman-in-waiting, they would very possibly have succeeded.

Under all this provocation the Admiral seems to have borne himself with moderation and dignity. Las Casas, who never spares him when there is cause for criticism, says that he "treated Juan Aguado always very well, as though he were a count." The same chronicler declares that he makes this statement with a full knowledge of all the facts, gathered from eye-witnesses and a careful examination of the records. Yielding no jot of his prerogative, exercising his authority, as far as he could, with his accustomed activity and decision, Columbus met the arrogance of his rival with irritating calmness, and absolutely ignored him in all the affairs of the island beyond the town walls. Aguado, in fact, soon busied himself more in working up an elaborate indictment of the Admiral's administration than in endeavoring to institute a government of his own. Like too many other reformers, his abilities lay rather in the direction of disturbance than of amelioration. When his claims or actions clashed with those of Columbus, the latter upheld his own rights with pertinacity, and, despite a certain inevitable loss of prestige, managed to sustain his position effectively. The following of Aguado was the more numerous, but that of the Admiral more influential. Such a condition could not long continue. Aguado, after a few months of turmoil and intrigue, announced his intention of returning to Spain and laying his reports and recommendations before the King and Queen. To his publicly asserted intimation of the probable effects of his disclosures upon the fortunes of Columbus the latter as publicly replied: "I, too, am going to Castile, to testify to the King and Queen, our sovereigns, against the lies which have been told them by those who have gone from here"; and he began to make preparations for leaving Hispaniola for an indefinite time. On this occasion, at least, he would trust neither to friendly influences nor the recollection of his own great services to

advocate his cause before their Majesties. Perhaps he felt that the royal memory was as short as the royal treasury, and there was a sensitive connection between the two.

Premising the retirement of Aguado from the colony, there was no reason, other than the enforced suspension of his own projects, why Columbus should not go to Spain at this season. Don Bartholomew could be trusted to keep the malcontents of the colony in order, and to carry out the work of "pacification" and tribute-gathering among the natives. The Admiral had no apprehension of any successful rising among the latter, although there would probably be outbreaks here and there to be dealt with in the customary vigorous manner. He had caused three more forts to be built at convenient strategic points through the disaffected districts, making, with St. Thomas and Concepcion, five garrisoned posts in all. In command of these he had placed soldiers of his confidence, with enough men to hold them against any native attack; so he felt satisfied with the military situation. The difficult problem of the revenue remained to be dealt with, but even that was somewhat simplified by recent developments. The king of the Vega Real, Guarionex, and some of his colleagues among the lesser caciques, wearied with the continuous hardship of the tribute, thought to relieve themselves of the burden of gathering the gold by informing the Spaniards where it could be found in such abundance that they would be willing to release the natives from the toilsome obligation of collecting it grain by grain. Whether this was a disclosure of some long-guarded tribal secret, or only the repetition of a report brought to his chief by some Indian, anxious to be spared the labor of hunting for his share of the tax, does not appear. Either case would be in consonance with what has happened numberless times since in many parts of the western world. At all events, the caciques of the Vega notified the Admiral that beyond the mountains which shut in the great plain on the south was another plain of less extent, watered by a large river which they called Hayna. In the ravines and gulches at the headwaters of this stream, and in the gravels of its affluents, they affirmed, the yellow



metal was to be found in quantities surpassing even the greed of the white men for it. Let the Guamiquina send his Christians there to see for themselves. In the old days much gold had been taken out of this country, which the natives knew as Bonao; its treasures might now be used to redeem the present generation from the hated impost of the strangers. The information was too circumstantial to be doubted, and the Admiral lost no time in sending a prospecting party into Bonao under command of a certain Miguel Diaz and that Francisco de Garay who, twenty-five years later, nearly saved the empire of Mexico to Montezuma. This force crossed the forbidding sierra, entered the golden district, met with a pacific reception at the hands of the inhabitants, and found gold so plentiful that, they reported, one man could gather as much there in a day as the quarterly tribute for each Indian amounted to. What was still better, they brought back a store of large nuggets and dust sufficient to convince the most sceptical of the value of the new mines. They had found ancient pits and workings, such as had not been seen elsewhere in the island, which testified to the importance attached to the deposits in early days. Altogether, their report was conclusive as to the superior extent and productiveness of the Bonao fields as compared with even the vaunted wealth of Cibao. To Columbus the news was incalculably welcome, coming at a time when he was marshalling every available evidence of the value of the Indies to the Crown. In the ancient workings which his men had found he fancied he saw the mines of Ophir, sought by Solomon of old. His own bold conception of passing to Spain from the south of Cuba, by way of the Red Sea, recurred to his mind, and he thought that by the same route the son of David had sent his ships to fetch from Bonao the gold for the Temple. Alive to the importance of his latest discovery, he directed Don Bartholomew to send an expedition to the mines and establish there a fortress to be called St. Christopher,—as a token of the Admiral's gratitude for the assistance thus opportunely afforded. Don Bartholomew was also charged to have the mines opened and worked by the new men

brought out by Aguado, and to secure the largest output possible during the Admiral's absence in Spain. The records do not show that the Indians gained anything by their revelation, but the results to the colonial and imperial exchequers were almost immediate; and this was the object of most import in the eyes both of King and Viceroy.

While the preparations were making for the departure of the Admiral and Aguado, a novel and unexpected disaster befell the colony. For the first time since the Spaniards arrived in the western waters they were subjected to the terrors and devastation of a Caribbean hurricane. To the enfeebled and disheartened among their number, it might well seem that the Judgment Day was at hand; while even to the more courageous there was enough of horror in the diabolical ferment of the elements to quail the toughest spirit. To add to the consternation of the observers, the waters of the harbor seemed to flee before the outburst of the gale, only to return with incredible violence and invade the land to a distance never before thought possible. When the fury of the awful tempest was past and the cowed settlers had an opportunity to examine its effects, they observed with dismay the havoc worked on their lightly built town and among the adjoining forests. What was of most moment to the Admiral and many of his people was that no trace remained of the vessels riding in the harbor, save the shattered wrecks of two or three hulls cast far inland by the wild rush of the tidal wave. Six of the ships had entirely disappeared,—overwhelmed, so some spectators said, by the first fierce shock of wind and sea. The damage might have proved wellnigh irreparable but for the shipwrights and materials which had been sent out on Aguado's squadron, in answer to the former requisitions of the Admiral. With the aid of these, and the efforts of the seamen who survived the hurricane, Columbus began the construction of two new caravels of small size, and the repair of the only one of his other vessels which was capable of reconstruction. Strangely enough, this was the little "Niña," which thus again escaped from dangers which proved fatal to so many of her consorts. There is something so uncanny, judged from the standpoint

of marine superstition, in the persistent evasion by the stout little vessel of the long series of varied perils to which she had been exposed in the three last eventful years, that one is tempted to consider the story of her present escape as mythical. But there is no ground for doubting the sincerity of the matter-of-fact record concerning her, and we must class it among those coincidences which form the best excuse for faith in Kismet. The effect of the hurricane on the mind of Columbus was so extraordinary that it is strange it has not been referred to. It was at this time, so Las Casas distinctly affirms, that he assumed a garb resembling that of a Franciscan friar, "because he was deeply vowed to St. Francis." The historian adds that he saw the Admiral in this dress in Seville at the time of his arrival from the voyage he was now contemplating, and intimates that the motive for his humility was connected with the horrors of the dreadful night when the powers of sky and sea combined to aid the unfortunate Haytians in sweeping the strangers from the earth. Situated as Columbus was, with what he believed to be the Spanish control of the empires of the East at stake, the man need not be a weakling who felt his heart sink within him at the first sight of a West Indian hurricane bursting upon his people and ships. In such an extremity it was second nature for Columbus to make a vow, as we have seen him do when the "Niña" was on the point of foundering on his return from the Discovery; and it was consonant with his recent experiences that this latest vow should take the form of an abandonment of the outward pomps and vanities of official rank. Such, at least, is the conclusion to be drawn from the statement of Las Casas, and it is the only one which fits the case. It has been often asserted that the adoption of the friar's dress was due to hypocrisy, ostentatious self-abasement, politic pity-seeking, and other motives similarly acceptable to their suggestors; but these are all based upon conjectures. The one cause assigned by companion or follower is that quoted from Las Casas.

There was no lack of occupation pending the building of the new vessels. Columbus concerted with Don Bartholo-

mew, whom he appointed his deputy, the policy to be pursued during his absence in Spain; charging his brother especially to visit the southern coast, where the new mines had been found, and thence to march into the western portion of the island, which had not as yet been explored by the Spaniards. With regard to the colonists at Isabella, he enjoined the necessity of a moderate and conciliatory attitude and the avoidance of all irritating measures. He appointed as governors for the five forts, which had been established in the disaffected districts, men on whose fidelity he could rely, and carefully instructed them as to their relations with the natives. As Chief Justice of the whole island he named Francisco Roldan, one of his personal followers, who had been supervisor of laborers at Isabella and had acceptably filled other minor offices, and whom he regarded as devotedly attached to his interests. Don Diego was to assist Don Bartholomew in the administration, and, in the event of the latter's death or incapacity, was to take his place. Great stress was laid upon the necessity of increasing the revenue, and Don Bartholomew was directed to encourage the discovery of forests of brazil and other valuable dye-woods, and increase the shipment of these, of cotton, and of other natural products as well as of gold. The small consignments of these articles which had already been sent to Spain had led to a demand for more, which promised to prove an important factor in the revenue returns.

Many weeks elapsed before the new caravels were finished, but by the end of February, 1496, one was reported ready for sea, together with the "Niña," the repairs on which were also completed. The new vessel was called the "Santa Cruz," and was given to Aguado; the Admiral himself preferred the more familiar, if less sightly quarters on the "Niña."

As the time approached for the sailing of the caravels, it became necessary to select the men who were to return to Spain under their Majesties' orders to Columbus. All who were seriously ill, those who had come out without salary and were suffering in consequence, and those who had wives and children dependent upon them at home and

were tired of staying away from them were to be permitted to leave the island. When a count was made of these classes it was found that nearly three hundred of the colonists were entitled to consideration. All could not be taken, and a fierce wrangle at once sprang up among the candidates as to who should remain. Some appealed to Aguado and some to the Admiral, and a very pretty conflict of authority was the result. The commissioner claimed the right of making the choice; the Viceroy denied it and persisted in choosing the lucky individuals himself. Aguado threatened, stormed, and requested, in turn, but in the end had to yield, and the emigrants were named by the Admiral. In all 225 men were granted permission to return and were distributed between the two caravels. This reduced the number remaining to about 500 or 600, but it cleared the colony of most of the useless human lumber which idleness and disease had caused to accumulate about Isabella. Of the vicious, turbulent, and refractory there was no lack among those who were left, but at least they were men of action; and, if they envied their worthless comrades the chance to see Spain, they were consoled by the prospect that their absence would assure more ample rations to those that were left. In fact, the subject of provisions was a serious one, for the colony could ill spare the supplies required by the crowded vessels on their long voyage. The stores of European foods had to be husbanded with the utmost care, for the country about Isabella was yielding little or nothing of native produce. In this emergency the Admiral decided to turn to account the large plantations of cassava and maize which he had observed at Guadalupe on the westward voyage two years before, and to call at that island to replenish his stock. This involved a certain amount of risk, in view of the large number of passengers to be fed for so many weeks; but he had their Majesties' especial injunctions against cutting down the portions of the colonists, and did not venture to draw too heavily upon the magazines at Isabella for his voyage.

On Tuesday, the 22nd of March, the two caravels got under way and left the harbor below Isabella, homeward

bound. Their departure was attended neither by the pomp of Cadiz nor the misgivings and regrets of the return of the first fleet to Spain. Two years had been sufficient effectually to dissipate from the minds of the colonists of Isabella all the glamor and enthusiasm about the Indies; and, though the hope of gain and successful adventure beat high in the hearts of most of those who watched the ships drifting into the distance, they cherished now no illusions as to the price of such success. As for the Admiral, some few no doubt regretted his departure, but most rejoiced thereat as removing a standing check upon their freedom of action. Their experience in the new lands he had discovered had not thus far been such as to excite a permanent enthusiasm, and they were not of the sort with whom loyalty counts for much. So, beyond such formal ceremonies as his rank called for, Columbus left the capital of his vast dominions without especial pomp or circumstance. His little squadron was only one the more sailing for home, and he himself was but another officer returning to lay his reports before the King and Queen. The departure and arrival of such ships and such officers was beginning to be an old story to the men of Isabella.

Besides the returning colonists, the caravels carried thirty chosen Indians whom the Admiral was taking with him to exhibit to Ferdinand and Isabella. Among these, if we may credit some authorities, was the redoubtable Caonabo; but other chroniclers of equal weight hold that he was drowned in the great hurricane which destroyed the six vessels, in one of which he was confined. The question is not material, as those who place him with the Admiral aboard the "Niña" admit that he died before the flotilla reached Spain. His prowess as a warrior, and fame as a great cacique, interested the few intelligent men who concerned themselves with the people and nature of the new countries, and a number of more or less improbable but attractive legends are related concerning him. As the prototype of all the aboriginal heroes of later romance and fable he possesses a certain interest, but the fact that within thirty years after his death the manner of it was so variously



related is evidence that he was looked upon by his captors as only a curio of a superior kind. Of more real interest was the fact that Don Bartholomew and a small escort accompanied the Admiral as far as Puerto de Plata, some twenty-five miles along the coast to the eastward of Isabella, and were landed there in order to examine the vicinity, with a view to removing a part of the colony to that site and commanding more nearly the adjoining country of Cibao. This port had always been a favorite with Columbus, and his recent experiences with the climate of Isabella had doubtless revived his earlier project concerning it. Landing his brother and companions, the Admiral made sail again and stood eastwards along the coast. Contrary winds so far detained the vessels that they did not reach the end of the island until the 22nd of March. From Cape Engaño, or, as we call it, Cabron, they steered direct for Guadalupe; but it was not until the 9th of April that they came to anchor off Maria Galante. The Admiral was learning to his cost that it is one thing to run down the Trades and another to beat up against them. The winds to which he owed the discovery of the Indies offered little aid for his return to Spain.

On Sunday, the 10th of April, the caravels sailed over to Guadalupe and anchored in a convenient haven. When the Spaniards essayed to land they were opposed by a throng of women who sallied from the forest armed with bows and arrows. "Because the surf ran very high they decided not to land," the chronicle reads; but the height of the breakers may have been magnified by the background of bellicose femininity, for two of the Haytian Indians were able to swim ashore and hold a parley with the women. The latter were assured that the white men intended no harm; that all they wanted was food, and for this they were ready to pay; but the women refused to be persuaded into letting the strangers land, and told the interpreters that they must go to another part of the coast, where the Carib men were at work on their plantations. There was nothing to do but follow this counsel; so back the Haytians swam to the boats, and these in turn bore the report to the Admiral. The

caravels weighed anchor and cruised alongshore until they reached a beach which swarmed with warriors, who, in token of defiance, sent showers of arrows in the direction of the ships. Here were the fields of maize and mandioca which the Spaniards coveted, and the prospect of having a brush with the cannibals added materially to the zest of foraging. The Admiral ordered out the boats and sent a party ashore, who were so warmly received that it was necessary to support them with a discharge from the ships' lombards. The savages could not withstand the thunders of these novel weapons and the havoc wrought by their missiles, and fled to the woods, leaving the Spaniards masters of the field. An examination disclosed a considerable store of food in the native cabins and an abundance of corn and mandioca in the plantations near by. The Admiral accordingly detailed a number of his own men and the Indians aboard the caravels to land and make a quantity of bread, after the native fashion, for use on the homeward voyage. While this was being done, he sent forty men inland to learn something of the country. They returned in a day or two, bringing ten Carib women and three lads as captives. One of the women, of commanding stature and unusual strength, who had been taken only after a hand-to-hand fight in which she had nearly strangled her pursuer, was said to be the chieftainess of the tribe. When she and her companions were brought before the Admiral, he questioned them exhaustively, through the interpreter, concerning their life and customs. Ever since he had reached Hayti, on his first voyage, he had heard of an island inhabited by women warriors who could be none other, in his belief, than the Asiatic Amazons of Mandeville and Marco Polo. His experience at Guadalupe both on the outward voyage and this later one tended to confirm the theory, while the statements frankly made by the captives in answer to his inquiries left little doubt in his mind that the island was under the dominion of the legendary heroines. It was an additional link in the chain of evidence proving, to his satisfaction, that he had reached the shores of Asia.

By the 20th of April the bread-makers had accumulated

a store of that provision, thought to be sufficient to last until the anchors were dropped in the port of Cadiz. The Admiral therefore made sail and laid his course for the Canaries. The captives taken in Guadalupe had all been put on shore, with the exception of the woman cacique and her little daughter. If we may believe the gossip of the ships, the mother was first touched with the misfortunes and then enamoured with the heroic qualities of Caonabo, and willingly sacrificed her liberty to share his imprisonment. Her fortitude and devotion were soon put to the test, as were those of all on board the caravels, whether captors or prisoners. In his desire to keep as near as possible the latitude of the Canary Islands, the Admiral maintained a course which was almost directly in the face of the north-east Trades. As often as he was blown off this, he would slowly and laboriously return, only to be driven away again. Week after week passed in this tedious blind beating about on the face of an unfamiliar ocean, until sickness broke out on the overcrowded vessels and white men and Indians alike began to droop and die. To this was added the distress caused by scanty rations of unwholesome food, followed all too soon by stark famine. "They suffered the last extremity of hunger," Las Casas says, quoting from the journal of Columbus, "so that all expected to perish." The biography attributed to the Admiral's son Fernando enlarges upon this, and alleges that the famished sailors and colonists went so far as to propose eating the Indians on board, but were shamed by their commander into bearing their sufferings with patience.<sup>1</sup> A ray of hope encouraged them when they caught sight of land and recognized it as one of the Azores, but this gave way to a deeper gloom when they were driven off its coast by contrary gales and failed to reach it again. To Columbus this experience must have vividly recalled the perilous days and sleepless nights of his return from the Discovery. There is something almost impressive

<sup>1</sup> Those critics who scoff at Columbus's tales of cannibalism among the Caribs accept without comment this story of the same villainous appetite among civilized Europeans. Perhaps we should be grateful that they do not lay the suggestion at his door.

in the persistency with which the elements assailed this one explorer on nearly every voyage he undertook. Other fleets far less skilfully captained crossed and recrossed the Atlantic without let or hindrance; but, with a single exception, no sooner did the unveiler of its mysteries venture upon its bosom than he was exposed to every form of danger known to those who go down into the deep in ships. In this instance, fifty-two days were spent in making the voyage between Guadalupe and Cape St. Vincent, and it was not until the 11th of June, 1496, that the weak and exhausted voyagers came to anchor in the bay of Cadiz. Many of their shipmates had succumbed to disease or privation, and among these, as some say, was Caonabo.

The arrival of Columbus commanded only so much interest as attached, in a country devoted to form, to the return of an officer of his high rank from a distant station. Since he left that port, in command of the colonizing expedition, in September, '93, three fleets had arrived from and as many left for the Indies. In the minds of the vulgar throng, Hispaniola and Isabella ranked with the Canaries and the Guinea Coast, as remote and pestilential colonies where profit and adventures could be had in plenty, did one live long enough to obtain either. The news that he had made new discoveries may have engaged the attention of the few, but to the populace at large it was only a matter of outlandish names. Their conception of the golden Indies was not based on increased geographical knowledge, but on the emaciated frames, empty pockets, and sallow features of the ex-colonists as they disembarked from the two caravels; and nothing the townspeople heard from their returning countrymen tended to arouse any enthusiasm for the lands beyond the sea, or the man who had discovered them. They had built high hopes upon the sailing of the Admiral and his expedition three years before, but nothing had resulted so far for Cadiz or her people. Whether the future had anything in store was more than doubtful. This indifference was not shared by the crews of three vessels which were anchored in the harbor when the Admiral entered with his two battered caravels. To them the haggard crowd

of returning adventurers possessed a peculiar, if not an inspiring interest; for the three ships were on the point of sailing for the colony which the arriving caravels had left. In command of the outward-bound flotilla was that Pedro Alonzo Niño who had served as pilot of the "Santa Maria" on the first voyage, and who was now only too glad to meet his old commander before sailing for Hispaniola. Niño's ships were laden exclusively with provisions for the colony, for a fleet of four ships which had been despatched with a similar cargo in January had been wrecked on the coast, and the colonists were supposed to be by this time in great need. Niño was also the bearer of the latest letters from Ferdinand and Isabella to the Admiral, in which they replied more in detail to the despatches brought by Torres than they had been able to do by Aguado. These letters were now read by Columbus, and Niño's departure delayed until corresponding instructions could be written to Don Bartholomew. The only matters of especial interest touched upon in the Admiral's hurried communication to his brother were that the King and Queen directed that all Indians captured in arms against the Spaniards, or otherwise refractory, should be sent to Spain as slaves, and that it was desirable to move the colony from Isabella to some convenient point on the southern coast of Hispaniola. In these measures we find the sovereigns readily concurring in the suggestions made by their Viceroy when their material interests were concerned, however much it may have suited their plans to curtail his authority and criticise his methods. The conscientious scruples of the Queen concerning the natives had been allayed by the familiar sophism that they were in revolt against her authority. The change in the site of the colony was due partly to the unhealthiness of Isabella and partly to the greater convenience of a port on the south coast, in view of the Admiral's discoveries in Cuba and Jamaica. The information then acquired all pointed to the development in the near future of discovery toward the south, and in such event Isabella would be practically useless as a base of operations.

Columbus finished his despatches in four days and Pedro

Alonzo set sail for the Indies on the 17th of June. The Admiral at once left Cadiz for Seville, where Fonseca and the officials charged with the administration of the new Indian House were established. The King and Queen were in the north of Spain; the former engaged on the frontiers of France in the war he was waging against that kingdom, the latter in the maritime province of Biscay, superintending the preparations for her daughter's voyage to Flanders to marry the Archduke Philip. Under these circumstances Columbus forwarded to their Majesties the announcement of his arrival and inquired their pleasure as to his movements, remaining meantime in Seville and Cordova. In those cities he met as many friends as enemies, for the bitterest opposition to his schemes and methods existed among the followers of the Court, and this was located for the time being at Burgos in Old Castile. But there was no lack of angry criticism and scornful incredulity in Seville and its vicinity; for so many ambitious townspeople had set sail with him in '93 to gather the riches of the Indies, and either never returned or returned wrecked in health and fortunes, that both the Indies and their Viceroy were a laughing-stock among the sober-minded. This Columbus could have borne, for it was only a long-familiar experience revived; but he could not support with patience the news he heard on every side, among his seagoing acquaintance, of preparations making by Vicente Yañez Pinzon and others to fit out ships and go on private cruises to the Indies under the general license of April, 1495. That he considered a direct and flagrant breach of the Crown's engagements with himself, and the fact that the men who had obtained the issue of that decree and proposed to turn it to their own advantage were his former followers or associates only added to his sense of cruel injustice. We catch a few glimpses of him during these weeks of waiting, walking through the streets of Seville in his monk-like garb, chatting about his Cuban voyage and Haytian skirmishes with his friend the Cura de los Palacios, showing to his acquaintance the strange relics and rich specimens he had brought home. But, at best, little remains to inform us as to the



manner of his reception, or his own sensations on returning from his long and eventful absence. Sometime about the end of July he received the answer of the King and Queen to his letter from Cadiz. It was dated from Almazan in Castile, on the 12th of the month, and was addressed to "Don Christopher Columbus, their Majesties' Admiral, Viceroy and Governor of the Indies in the Ocean Sea." In a few lines of rather formal condescension the Queen acknowledged his letters and report and expressed gratification at his safe arrival. "Since you say you will soon be here," she concluded, "let your coming be whenever in your judgment it will not cause you trouble, for in what is past you have had trouble enough." The phrase, in the original, is genuinely kind and was no doubt grateful to the Admiral; but what was of even more moment was the use of his full official title. Whatever was the motive for ignoring his rank in the missives sent by Aguado, it had disappeared, and their Majesties were once more disposed to meet their deputy with apparent frankness and cordiality. Soon after receiving this letter Columbus set out for Burgos, accompanied by a considerable retinue, in which were Caonabo's brother and other Indians. He took with him all the more notable gifts of gold and other products which he had collected, the large nuggets and coarse gold which had been found by the Spaniards or delivered to them by the natives, golden masks, stone idols, Carib weapons, strange birds, and whatever else he thought would support, before their Majesties, his persistent assertions as to the wealth of the Indies. His journey lay through nearly the whole width of Spain, and wherever he went he displayed to the learned and curious the tawny natives from the new-found Indies, bedecked in golden ornaments and bearing their fragile weapons of wood and reed. Ferdinand and Isabella were not at Burgos when the Admiral arrived, but reached the city a few days afterward. Their welcome was apparently sincere and free from all taint of displeasure. They listened with extreme interest to his account of all that had happened in Hispaniola and on the Cuban voyage, plying him with questions concerning their people and

products and his own theories as to the identity of the islands with those mentioned by travellers in Asia. His own health and personal welfare were also inquired for with flattering minuteness, and much solicitude expressed at his severe and repeated sufferings. Their Majesties showed particular concern about the mines of Hispaniola, and were well pleased with the specimens of their output which the Admiral presented. They listened with sympathy to his relation of the trials to which the colony at Isabella had been subjected, but expressed themselves as satisfied with all that he had done. On a later occasion, in writing to their Majesties, he records the assurances which they gave him during this interview:—

“Your Highnesses answered me with that courage which the whole world knows you possess, and told me that I should not care for anything of that kind, because it was your intention to prosecute this undertaking and support it, even if it produced nothing but rocks and stones; that you did not attach much importance to the cost involved, for in other affairs of less moment you were spending a great deal more; and that you considered everything that had been spent thus far to have been very well employed, and that what should be spent in the future would be equally to your advantage, as you believed that our holy faith would be extended and your royal dominions enlarged. You also said that those who spoke evil of this enterprise were not friends of your royal estate.”

In short, on leaving the royal presence, Columbus was entitled to feel that he had the hearty support and approval of the King and Queen, and that the intrigues which his influential enemies had so successfully initiated met with no encouragement from Ferdinand and Isabella. Las Casas, who had all the documentary history of these cabals in his hands when he wrote, sums up the case effectively when he says: “Of the reports which Juan Aguado brought and laid before the sovereigns, very little was heard; and so there is nothing more to say, or to waste time over, about Juan Aguado.”

One significant declaration was made by the Admiral to their Majesties in this audience at Burgos, — that whatever

he had done thus far in their service was little in comparison to that which he would accomplish on his next voyage. He had given them grand islands heretofore, he told them; now, if it pleased God, he would give them a great land, "which should be, perhaps, another continent." This, he assured his august hearers, would prove to be as certain as had the assertions he had made them, before starting on his first voyage, concerning lands in the West. This "great land," it is clear, was not Asia or Cuba: it was that country to the south, of which he had heard in Cuba itself, Jamaica, Hayti, and Guadalupe. We have seen him on the outward voyage in '93 pondering over the vague hints he had gathered at the time of the Discovery concerning this southern mystery, and planning to explore it later on; we find him three years later, with the experiences among the natives of Southern Cuba and Jamaica fresh in his mind, telling his royal patrons that, if they will but permit him, he will add a new "terra firma" to their dominions, in addition to that easternmost Asia which, as he believed, he had already discovered for them.





### XIII.

#### PLANNING NEW DISCOVERIES.

NO time could have been less favorable for engaging the attention of Ferdinand and Isabella in colonial affairs than was the summer of 1496. The King was deeply immersed in the operations of his armies in Sicily and along the frontiers of France, with all the complex diplomatic relations attendant upon these two wars; while the Queen was equally absorbed in the elaborate preparations making to celebrate the double wedding which she and her husband had so shrewdly negotiated with the Emperor Maximilian of Germany. The crown prince, Juan, of Spain was to marry Margaret, the daughter of Maximilian, and the latter's heir, the Archduke Philip, was to wed the Princess Juana, the second daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella. As became so auspicious and mighty an alliance, the Crown of Spain proposed to challenge the admiration of Europe with the splendor of the nuptials. An imposing armada, consisting of no less than 120 vessels manned by nearly 20,000 men, was brought together at Laredo on the Biscayan coast to transport the Princess Juana to Flanders and bring back the Princess Margaret, after which a formidable succession of tourneys and pageants was to be celebrated by the Court. A marriage was also being arranged between Prince Arthur, the son of Henry VII. of England, and the princess who, in after years, attained a melancholy fame as Katherine of Aragon; and this also involved no little negotiation and effort. When we consider the restless and far-reaching nature of Ferdinand's ambition, and the ceremonious and

scrupulous interest with which Isabella supervised every incident affecting the welfare of her children and the dignity of her realm, we can conceive that neither sovereign could find much leisure to give to their wrangling colonists beyond the Western Ocean. Moreover, once they had heard their Admiral's reports, listened to his projects for the future, and expressed their approval of one and sympathy with the other, there remained the awkward question of ways and means to be considered. The programme sketched by Columbus, to which their Majesties heartily assented in general terms, involved the outlay of ten millions of maravedies at the least. The treasures of the twin kingdoms had been drained dry between the foreign wars and domestic ostentation. With two armies in the field and what amounted to a third on board the Flanders armada, with this fleet and the Sicilian armament afloat, and with a people burdened with the last straw of taxation and a military levy which called for one in ten of the entire adult male population, not even the prospect of adding another continent to the recently discovered Asia could induce the Crown to set aside so great an amount just at that season. Don Christopher Columbus, Admiral and Viceroy, must wait, brilliant and seductive as were his new proposals.

That his presence at the Court had immediately and effectually checked the progress of the intrigues against him is apparent. To the King and Queen the replies he made to the strictures of his adversaries were conclusive. They were equally gratified with the evidences he presented of successful exploration and with the plausibility of his arguments concerning a Terra Firma to the south of Hayti, Cuba, and Jamaica. They chided him gently for his sternness with the Castilian hidalgos, but accepted his explanations as sufficient, and gave repeated indications that, whatever want of confidence they had shown in the wisdom or propriety of some of his actions as related to them by Fray Boil and his party, they looked upon them as venial errors of judgment when compared with the tangible outcome of his labors. He was assured that in the near future his plans should be adopted and carried out to their fullest extent,

and that no amount of calumny or criticism could swerve their Majesties from this attitude. In fact, the same influences which deterred them from acting promptly in accordance with his urgent recommendations had deprived the intrigue against Columbus of all importance. The King and Queen had now neither leisure nor inclination to sit in judgment on the merits of a colonial squabble, and it rapidly shrank to the proportions of a dead issue. We have a concise statement from the Admiral's own pen of the situation of this whole business as it existed after his arrival at Court. Exhibiting as it does both his own position and that of his opponents, and detailing the considerations which influenced Ferdinand and Isabella to support him in spite of the accusations heaped upon him, the exposition will bear translating : —

“In Spain they vilified and derided the enterprise which was inaugurated in Hispaniola, because I did not at once send back the ships freighted with gold ; not considering the shortness of the time, or all the other difficulties of which I have spoken. For this reason, — either on account of my sins, or, rather, for my salvation, as I believe it shall prove, — all that I said or asked for was treated with detestation and obstructed ; wherefore I resolved to come to your Majesties, to express my astonishment at such treatment and show you the just grounds I had for all that was done. I told you of the towns I had seen, in which or from which many souls might be saved ; I brought you the submissions of the tribes of Hispaniola, under which they agreed to pay tribute and acknowledged you as their sovereigns and lords ; I brought also a large quantity of gold, to show that there are ores and very large nuggets, and copper as well ; and I brought specimens of many kinds of spices, which it would be tedious to enumerate, and told you of the great abundance of brazil-wood and infinite other products. All this availed nothing with those persons who were bent on slandering the undertaking and had already begun to do so. They did not weigh the service done Our Lord in the salvation of so many souls, or say that this was a glory for your Highnesses, of a higher quality than that which any prince has enjoyed until this time. since the labor and sacrifice were both for temporal and spiritual ends, and it is inconceivable that, with the progress of time, Spain should not receive therefrom great advantages, as the indica-



tions are so manifest from what has already been written of these expeditions that the fulfilment of the future may likewise be looked for. Nor did they care to mention the deeds done by the great princes of the world to extend their fame; as Solomon, for example, who sent from Jerusalem to the end of the Orient to examine the mountain of Ophir, in which voyage his ships were detained for three years, *which Ophir your Majesties now possess in the island of Hispaniola*;<sup>1</sup> or Alexander, who sent to study the government of the island of Taprobana,<sup>2</sup> in India; or the Emperor Nero, who sent to investigate the sources of the Nile, and the reason why they rose in the summer when rains are few; or the other many great actions done by princes; or that to princes these achievements are given to be done. Nor did it avail for me to reply that I had never read that kings of Castile had ever won any lands beyond its borders, and that this land out here is that other world to secure which the Romans, Alexander, and the Greeks labored with such vast sacrifices. Nor, to speak of the present, was it of any use for me to refer to the kings of Portugal, who have had the courage to support the Guinea enterprise and the discovery of that country, and who have spent gold and men to such a degree that if any one should number the people of that kingdom he would find that half as many as are left have died in Guinea. Yet these kings continued until the undertaking produced for them what now is apparent, although they began with it a long while ago and it is only very lately that it has yielded any revenue. The same sovereigns also had the daring to invade Africa and engage in the conquest of Ceuta, Tangiers, Arcilla, and Alagar, and to wage perpetual war against the Moors; all this at great cost and with the single end of doing that which is worthy of a king. — to serve God, and to extend their kingdom.

“The more I said, the more was the effort redoubled to expose this enterprise to scorn and to show hatred of it, no attention being paid to the fact that all the rest of the world so much admired it, and that throughout Christendom your Majesties were so extolled for having assumed it that there was no prince, great or petty, who did not desire a letter about it. To all this your Highnesses answered by laughing and telling me not to trouble myself about anything, for you attached neither weight nor credence to those who spoke evil of this enterprise.”

<sup>1</sup> The italics are ours. The reference to the “End of the Orient” has a special meaning when compared with the change made in the name of Cape Alpha and Omega on the return voyage from Cuba.

<sup>2</sup> The ancient and mediæval name for Sumatra.

From the time of his arrival in Burgos, in August or September of 1496, to the spring of 1497 the season was one of comparative inaction for Columbus, and was devoted by him to the settlement of old affairs and the organization of his new plans. At their Majesties' desire he drew up an elaborate estimate of the cost of executing the plans he had formed for a new voyage of discovery, and also a minute or scheme of the policy he proposed to follow with regard to the government of Hispaniola. These suggestions were discussed in a desultory way and accepted by the Crown, but their execution was deferred until a more convenient season. The Admiral wished to despatch as soon as possible two more caravels to Hispaniola, which should take out additional supplies of provisions and also a full equipment of miners and appliances for developing the mines of the island to their full capacity. With a fleet of six more vessels he would himself sail into the Southwest, in search of the countries which he believed lay in that direction, and, after discovering these, or proving their non-existence, would guide his course to Hispaniola. Other proposals of minor importance were made, the whole subject being treated in a broad and sagacious spirit, which has been carefully obscured by the censors of its author. In addition to elaborating these designs, the Admiral found much to do in liquidating the complicated accounts of his government and overseeing the adjustment of the contracts existing between the Crown and those colonists who had returned, or the heirs of those who had died. From the records of these transactions it appears that he had advanced from his personal resources considerable sums to indigent settlers, and shown a solicitude which would reflect honor on any other governor to protect the interests of the heirs of such of his people as had lost their lives. "Many men, both natives of Spain and foreigners, have died in the Indies," he represented to their Majesties, "and I ordered that their wills should be taken out and fulfilled, in virtue of the powers conferred on me by your Highnesses. To this end I charged Escobar in Seville and Juan de Leon in Isabella that they should well and faithfully attend to all this matter, both in paying the

debts of the deceased (in case their heirs failed to do so) and in collecting all their property and salary." Both in connection with these financial settlements and in his schemes for the future the Admiral came frequently into open conflict with Fonseca and his lieutenant Ximeno de Bribiesca, and as he was invariably successful in carrying his point, on appealing to the King or Queen, the arrogant churchman and his wily proselyte nursed their wrath until an occasion for revenge should arrive.

Columbus was not so absorbed in magnificent schemes of future discovery and development, or in strengthening the strained foundations of his standing at Court, that he neglected his personal interests. He remonstrated with emphasis and boldness against the general license to make voyages to the Indies, granted by the Crown in April, '95, and secured the promise of its revocation as far as it infringed his solemnly guaranteed rights. He also pressed upon their Majesties the propriety, in view of the recent disputes concerning the extent of his authority, of giving him a specific and definite confirmation of his rank and prerogatives, and sanctioning the entail of these upon his heirs male. To both requests Ferdinand and Isabella gave a ready acquiescence. Indeed, everything that the Admiral now proposed was apparently accepted by them with the same unhesitating alacrity as they showed in the preparations for the second voyage in '93. They could not undertake to meet his wishes at once, but they were willing to commit themselves frankly to his projects and instruct their officials to make provision for their convenient execution. We can find no trace, during these and the succeeding months, of the intrigue against Columbus. Whatever might be the cause of this sudden accession of royal favor, — whether recognition of services rendered, expectation of still greater advantages to be derived from their connection with him, compensation for their hasty condemnation of him in his absence, or otherwise, — Ferdinand and Isabella lent themselves to all of the Admiral's proposals with a facility which baffles comprehension, if we accept the theory that he was a reckless adventurer, insatiate speculator, and visionary

romancer. There must have been about this man more of what we moderns term "personal magnetism," and the weighty influence born of successful achievement, than his critics have cared to admit.

Not even the untoward incident of Pedro Alonzo Niño's stupendous blunder was sufficient to shake the regenerated confidence of the King and Queen. That worthy pilot had safely navigated his little fleet across the seas to Isabella, and there delivered his cargo and despatches to Don Bartholomew some time in August, '96. The latter, having no other cargo at hand, and anxious to send back Pedro Alonzo without delay, loaded the vessels with 300 Indian slaves. The fleet made a good passage home, arriving in Spain about the end of October. Elated with his successful voyage and aware of the value of slaves in the Seville market, Pedro Alonzo wrote hurriedly to both the King and Queen and the Admiral, claiming the customary gratuity for a signal service and announcing that he brought back his ships freighted with gold. This done, he hastened to his home at Moguer, carrying with him the letters sent by Don Bartholomew to the Admiral. The receipt of such gratifying news, apparently confirming all that Columbus had said to their Majesties of the surpassing wealth of the lately discovered mines of Bonao, — or Ophir, as he thought it surely was, — was doubly grateful on account of the solution it afforded to the financial difficulties surrounding the outfitting of the proposed new voyage. Here were funds in plenty for the Admiral's projects, without interfering with the domestic requirements of the Crown. "Since Pilot Pedro Alonzo has brought so much gold," Ferdinand is reported to have said to the Admiral, "you can take from it the amounts I have promised you, and more too." Thereupon the King notified his treasurer not to distress himself further about providing the sums called for by the Admiral's estimates, but to apply his whole available resources to the needs of the French campaign. Weeks passed without other tidings from Pedro, and the King and Columbus became anxious for confirmation of his assertions. At length, toward the end of December, the tardy pilot reached the Court, pre-

sented his budget of letters, and explained that his boast of October was a mere figure of speech ; that his gold was in the shape of slaves, — who were as good as money, after all. The blow was a cruel one to the Admiral, for he had acted, since receiving the first report, on the assumption that nothing now remained but to fit out his fleet, adjust his affairs with the King and Queen, and start on a new career of discovery. It was all the more bitter because of the immense advantage it gave his adversaries. Neglected by Ferdinand and Isabella, they had been compelled to watch the steady advance of the Admiral in the royal favor until, with the news that a great remittance of gold had arrived and the colony was at last a source of large revenue, their chief argument was destroyed and they seemed to be finally discredited. When Pedro Alonzo's reckless folly was made known, all their allegations gained new strength, and they found themselves armed with a corroboration of their charges which surpassed their utmost hopes. Once more the cabal raised its voice and, with renewed activity, prosecuted its intrigues.

It was too late. Ferdinand and Isabella had espoused the Admiral's cause and were bent on putting his brilliant programme to the test. However unpopular he and his enterprise were with the Court and nation at large,—and, we are told, they were esteemed little better than a jest,—the sovereigns held to their faith both in the man and his schemes. Notwithstanding this grateful countenance, the winter passed in weary waiting. No further word came from the Indies, and the absolute want of funds prevented any vessels being sent thither. Don Bartholomew had written by Pedro Alonzo that he intended to march at once to the new mines, found a settlement there, and push the mining operations with energy ; after which he should visit the brazil-wood forests in the southwestern part of the island and endeavor to win over the caciques of that hitherto undisturbed region. Beyond this, Columbus knew nothing, and his solicitude concerning the welfare of the colony was as keen as was his impatience to put his plans into execution. But it soon became evident that their Majesties were not willfully procrastinating.

Early in March, '97, the fleet arrived from Flanders with the Princess Margaret, and on April 3rd her marriage with Prince Juan was solemnized. Within three weeks thereafter the royal secretaries began to issue decree after decree relating to the affairs of the Indies, and scarcely a week passed during the succeeding three months without some provision relating to the Admiral's interests being signed by Ferdinand and Isabella. By the end of June all of the most important measures which had been under discussion since his arrival at Court in August were formally disposed of. He was authorized to carry out his proposal—made under the pressure of financial straits—of reducing the number of colonists to 330,—or 500, in certain contingencies; to purchase in Spain the supplies and materials he needed at such prices as he should deem fair; to liquidate the accounts which were due in the Indies with the proceeds of such gold or other valuable products as might be obtained there; and to dispense with the payment of local and general taxes on his vessels and their cargoes. His recommendations concerning the administration of the colony were approved in a letter of instructions "For the population of the islands and mainland already discovered and placed under our dominion, and of those which yet remain to be discovered in the direction of the Indies which are in the Ocean Sea." This document adopts without alteration the suggestions made by Columbus for reforming the government of the colony. The Indians were to be diligently taught by the clergy who were to take the place of Fray Boil's runaways; a systematic cultivation of the soil was enjoined, and the tithe of the crops granted the Church for its support; cattle and horses were to be bred on farms maintained by the Crown; the colonists were to draw fixed pay and rations, but only until the crops should be sufficient to support them; the salaries of the officials and employees were to be determined by the Admiral and paid on his authorization; the gold obtained from the new mines was to be coined in the colony into moneys corresponding with those of Spain; and the tribute imposed upon the Indians was to be collected under the supervision of an officer especially appointed,



who was to have five per cent of all that was received. We look in vain for a reservation or exception in any of these decrees ; they are as frankly, distinctly, and unreservedly issued in the Admiral's interest as though no one had ever questioned the wisdom of his actions, the extent of his authority, or the value of his achievements. Boil, Margarite, and Aguado might never have existed, so little did the royal provisions suggest any divergence of views as to the eminent prudence of the Admiral's conduct.

As if to emphasize their satisfaction with his past course and their adherence to his plans for the future, the King and Queen signed on the same day three elaborate instruments ; the first, confirming to Columbus and his descendants the emoluments and benefits assured to him in the famous agreement of discovery signed on April 17th, 1492, before the walls of Granada ; the second, confirming to him and his heirs the rank and prerogatives of Admiral of the Ocean Sea and Viceroy and Governor of the Indies, bestowed upon him on April 30th, 1492 ; and the third granting him authority to entail these rights and privileges in the line of his male successors. Moreover, their Majesties, in fulfilment of the contract of '92, caused to be copied from the Castilian archives all the letters patent, decrees, and rescripts conferring emoluments, prerogatives, and distinctions upon the High Admiral of Castile, and authorized the enjoyment of like privileges by Columbus and his descendants as Admirals of the Indies. Apart from the dignities of this elevated rank, the salaries and perquisites were, for the day, enormous, and by this measure Columbus was assured of a large income independent of the returns from the lands which he discovered. This was not the only provision made for his financial welfare at this time. The accountants of the Crown were directed to write off, or cancel, the huge sums with which Columbus was charged on the royal books as his share, under the contract cited, of the cost of the armaments despatched and operations conducted heretofore in the Indies (excepting of the voyage of Discovery, which had been already liquidated), but to allow him, nevertheless, his one-eighth share of all the proceeds received from the colony. This

liberal modification was also made applicable to the expedition about to be fitted out. Still another generous amendment in the terms of the contract exempted the Admiral from contributing, for three years, his one-eighth of all expenses, while allowing him to draw his share from the gross receipts of the colony.

It has been claimed that, in securing these extraordinary largesses, Columbus played upon the too confiding and susceptible natures of his royal patrons, and, by his blandishments, extorted from them concessions which shamed his magnanimity as much as they discredited the royal sagacity. Those who hold this opinion have been careless students of the lives of Ferdinand and his consort. There is something grotesque in the idea of Columbus beguiling their Catholic Majesties — perhaps the two shrewdest princes of their time — into signing away a vast revenue by the recital of his dazzling expectations. Isabella, it is true, was often generous by disposition, and Ferdinand sometimes so from policy; but they both were amply endowed with the homely virtue of thrift, and were wont to drive as hard a bargain as any Jew they had forced across their borders. In releasing the Admiral from his obligations and bestowing upon him princely gifts, there was some motive other than maudlin sentimentality or blind carelessness. In our belief, that motive was the deliberate conviction that it was to the interest of Castile and Aragon to heap honor, rank, and profit upon the one man who had shown himself capable of conceiving and executing the greatest undertaking of historic times. It was “good business,” to use a purely commercial phrase, to reward him for what he had done and satisfy him as to the outcome of the future. They believed they would be the gainers, for they grasped the significance of the discoveries he had already made, and shared his confidence in the importance of those to follow. Some spark of enthusiasm there may have been at the outset, but its last embers had smouldered beyond revival by the time of the Aguado episode, and what Ferdinand and Isabella were doing in 1497 was the effect of studied calculation, not of over-persuasion or benevolence. The King was not a philanthropist,

or the Queen an impressionable school-girl. Nor was Columbus the hypocritical self-seeker his censors would fain have us believe. They pass over with scanty mention the crowning recompense which was at this time offered to him, and refused, although it was thought by the successor of Ferdinand and Isabella to be almost too extravagant a return to make to Cortez and Pizarro for the empires of the Aztecs and the Incas. Their Majesties offered to him, in addition to the grants we have recited, a tract of land 200 miles long by 100 miles wide, to be selected by himself in the island of Hispaniola, with the rank and title of duke or marquis, as he might elect. The proposal was accompanied by no conditions; its acceptance would place him and his successors in the front rank of the proudest nobility of Christendom at a time when such a distinction possessed a value inconceivable to us; it was peculiarly tempting to Columbus, whose chief ambition, as we shall see, was to perpetuate, in his descendants, the fame of his achievements; it was made in conjunction with other boons which assured both him and his successors a great fortune to sustain the honor worthily. From every consideration, the opportunity for gratifying a legitimate ambition would seem fairly irresistible. Yet Columbus declined the offer without hesitation, even with bluntness. We do not remember to have seen his own words quoted: "I entreated their Majesties," he wrote to his brother Bartholomew, "that they would not command me to accept it, in order to avoid the scandal of being calumniated, and so that the rest of my plans should not be lost; because, however little my lands might be colonized, the evil tongues would always say that I settled my own and neglected theirs, and also that I had chosen the best for myself. From this would arise disputes which would redound to my injury; therefore I said that, since their Majesties have bestowed upon me the tenth and the eighth of the products of all the Indies, I desire no more." The same pens which allege that his one purpose was "to make the Indies a paying investment" for himself charge Columbus with consistently exaggerating the importance of his discoveries. In the case just cited, at least, he refused

the most glittering prize that could be offered him, rather than jeopardize his hopes in the remote regions he was so painfully bringing within the pale of the known world.

The liberality of the sovereigns did not end with their acceptance of the Admiral's policy and the bestowal of rewards. The friction which had existed for so many years between him and Fonseca was in no small degree responsible for the delays and disputes which had so constantly arisen. Conscious of this want of harmony and of its dangerous consequences to the colony, Ferdinand and Isabella now proposed to relieve Fonseca of his office of director of Indian affairs and put in his place Antonio de Torres, whose devotion to the Admiral and familiarity with the requirements of the colonial situation made his appointment doubly acceptable to the latter. Unfortunately, Torres had his whims ; he demanded such conditions of rank and authority that he finally wearied his royal master and mistress, and they withdrew his appointment and reinstated Fonseca. We find a few despatches, dating from this period, running in the names of Columbus and Torres, but the project scarcely became an effective reality ; and thus what was probably the most important to Columbus of all the measures sanctioned by their Majesties was nullified by the vanity of his associate. Had Torres succeeded Fonseca, the following ten years would have borne other fruit for the Admiral.

One of the matters which Columbus had most at heart was the settlement of Hispaniola by a more industrious and reliable class of persons than those who had heretofore gone thither. To this end he solicited from their Majesties certain exemptions and allowances in favor of the colonists, which were granted as soon as asked for. They exhibit in every line a rational and temperate plan for the development of the new possessions, and should go far to acquit their proposer from the charge of hasty and reckless administration. One of the decrees which relates to these measures provided for the return of all the colonists in the Indies who should so desire, and their substitution by an equal number from the 330 whose engagement has been alluded to ; for the shipment of a sufficient equipment of mining tools and implements of

husbandry ; for the transporting of the cattle and live stock in an old vessel which could be broken up on reaching Hispaniola and used in the construction of the town to be built near the new mines on the south coast ; for grain and biscuits to last until mills could be erected ; for the machinery and stones needed in the latter ; for a physician, apothecary, herbalist, and, oddly enough, "some musical instruments and players for the diversion of the people who are to be there." A special clause provided for the settlement in Hispaniola of a number of priests and friars, who should regularly perform the offices of the church in the colony and endeavor to convert the natives. Another decree authorized the Admiral to allot lands to such of the colonists as seemed to him worthy, provided that the settlers should cultivate their holdings, build houses and mills, and reside at least four years on their allotments. All metals, dye-woods, spices, and other valuable commodities were reserved to the Crown.

We have been thus minute in referring to these arrangements because of the censures unstintedly heaped upon Columbus by reason of his alleged suggestion that "the prisons disgorge their vermin" in order to supply him with the men he needed to man his ships on the coming voyage, and to keep his colony up to the established number. The decrees we have quoted prove emphatically that he had no such intention ; his programme of colonization was equal in breadth and wisdom to any which followed it for two centuries. What he did propose, and what was authorized, was that, *in addition* to the useful and salaried colonists already provided for, such offenders against the laws as "deserved or ought to be exiled, according to the code and laws of the kingdoms, to some island, or to labor and work in the mines," should go "to work in the island of Hispaniola in such things as the Admiral of the Indies should specify and direct, for the time they were to pass in the other island at work in the mines." Upon serving one or two years, according to the gravity of their offence, and obtaining from the Admiral a certificate of satisfactory conduct, they were to be pardoned the remainder of their sentences. Otherwise

they were to continue to perform the service prescribed. In doing this, the Crown obtained a supply of labor which would relieve the better class from the excessive service of which such bitter complaints had been made, and, at the same time, would not be called upon to pay more than the convicts would cost elsewhere. The arrangement, in short, was thought to be beneficial to the colony and a great economy to the Crown. It was a great improvement on some of the methods adopted, centuries later, in settling certain of the North American colonies, the English West Indies, and the great Australasian islands; for the convicts were subordinated to the responsible classes and were practically sentenced to hard labor in the service of the community.<sup>1</sup> The common assertion, that the prisons were emptied by Columbus in desperation at his inability to get enough men so deluded or so ignorant as to join him on the new venture, is easily disproved by a reference to the dates of the several decrees. The final provisions for the engagement of the salaried settlers were made on June 15th, 1497, and the decrees concerning the convicts issued just one week later, on June 22nd. In seven days, during which Columbus did not stir from Court and the decrees could not have been generally published, the enlistment of the decent element of society could scarcely have failed so hopelessly as to force him to look to the prisons as affording the only solution of his schemes of colonization.

The Court had left Burgos and gone to Medina del Campo some time in May, and the second half of this long series of decrees was dated from the latter city. It closed with the confirmation, on July 22nd, of the appointment of Don Bartholomew as Adelantado, which, when made by the Admiral at Isabella three years before, had been considered by their Majesties as an excess of authority. Its legalization now was only an additional evidence of their desire to gratify and reward Columbus.

Another instance of their Majesties' recession from the

<sup>1</sup> Las Casas's testimony is emphatic: "I knew some of these men in Hispaniola, and even an occasional one who had had his ears cropped, and I always found them very responsible people."



position taken at the season of their displeasure against the Admiral was given in a decree rescinding the general license granted in April, '95, to make voyages to the Indies, "in so far as that is prejudicial to the Admiral." That license was a bold infraction of the solemn guarantees given by the Crown to Columbus. We believe that it never would have been issued had not Ferdinand and Isabella been persuaded by Vincente Yañez Pinzon and the Admiral's enemies that he had probably perished on the Cuban cruise. It is commonly asserted that several voyages were undertaken under this permission in the year elapsing between its date and the return of Columbus to Spain, and an effort has been made to connect Vespucci with one of these.<sup>1</sup> We do not find any evidence supporting either of these assumptions, and the negative testimony is strongly against them. Under the decree of '95, any navigator undertaking such a voyage was bound to account to Columbus for the latter's one-eighth interest in all the traffic with the Indies, and there is no mention of any such claim by the Admiral, even when recapitulating in later years the several injustices to which he had been subjected. If the license itself was a gross breach of faith, the partial revocation of it proved to be an act of sheer hypocrisy ; for no sooner did Columbus get well away from Spain than several projects were set on foot, with the connivance, if not the actual assistance, of the Crown, to infringe his rights by making independent voyages of discovery. Of these we shall find the Admiral complaining, and with reason, for following so soon after this renewed assurance of his exclusive rights of navigation ; but, in soliciting the latter, we are inclined to think he was protesting against an abstract injustice and not against any particular act.

If he were bent only upon his own aggrandizement and justification, he certainly had no cause for discontent with the result of his stay at Court, long as it had been, when, toward the close of July, he took his leave of the King and Queen and started for Seville. But, tenacious though he

<sup>1</sup> This was written before Professor Fiske's "Discovery of America" reached our hands. His scholarly advocacy of Varnhagen's theory gives a new importance to the whole question.

was of his rights and fame, these were subordinate to the realization of his grand schemes. His heart was in his life's work, and its success was the absorbing consideration in his mind. When, therefore, he had satisfactorily adjusted all the matters upon which he desired the royal concurrence or authority, his thoughts turned with impatient energy to the instant realization of his plans. A year had passed since Pedro Alonzo took out the last cargo of supplies to Isabella, and the Admiral was haunted with the fear that disaster might ensue were not additional succor promptly sent. His eager desire to fathom the secrets of the South had only increased as time had passed, but his first duty was to his colony in Hispaniola. Consequently he urged upon Fonseca that at least a part of the funds whose expenditure had been authorized by the King and Queen should be applied at once to fitting out a couple of caravels to be despatched in advance of his own departure. He even went so far as to reëngage the "Niña" and "Santa Cruz" for the voyage and put his own men in charge of them. Fonseca could not find the necessary money for the purchase of the supplies, and the weeks slipped by with nothing done, until the captains of the contracted vessels, Colin and Medel, made other engagements and sailed off with the Admiral's artillery and equipment. Columbus exhausted every argument and inducement to secure the granting of the needful credits, but the royal exchequer was bankrupt, and the most he could secure were promises for the future. At last, on the 9th of October, an order was issued by Queen Isabella assigning to the Admiral and Fonseca, for the costs of the proposed expedition, three million maravedies, — less than one-half of the total sum needed. This was to be derived from the sale of grain to some Genoese merchants, and would at least provide for the despatch of the needed supplies to Hispaniola. Almost immediately thereafter fresh causes supervened to delay still farther the despatch of the vessels. King John of Portugal died, and the opportunity arose for fresh matrimonial negotiations between Ferdinand and Isabella and his successor. At about the same time their son Juan, the heir to the crowns of Aragon and Castile,

•

also died suddenly, and the whole machinery of government was thrown for a time into confusion. Additional afflictions overtook the royal family, until it was out of the question to intrude upon their Majesties with questions of state, and, the affairs of the Indies being left wholly to Fonseca, that dignitary consulted his own ideas in complying with the Admiral's reiterated appeals for urgency. The ensuing delay was well-nigh intolerable to Columbus, although he realized the financial straits of the royal treasury and was continually brooding upon the best means of enabling the new possessions to come to its assistance. He had to stand idle while the Court and maritime circles rang with the departure of Vasco da Gama from Lisbon, to reach the Indies by a voyage around the recently discovered Cape of Good Hope, which, it was claimed by the Portuguese, would enable them to get to the land of spices and gold without violating the ocean boundaries fixed by the Pope. There were also rumors from England of the Venetian navigator, Cabot, sailing to the west in the service of King Henry, in search of a northern way to the common goal of Asia. To the proud spirit of Columbus these tidings were as gall and wormwood. Now that he had shown the way, the very monarchs who had rejected his proposals ten years before were rivalling one another in their efforts to secure some share of the world he had unveiled, while his own sovereigns let the golden opportunity escape in procrastination and delay.

In these dark days he wrote at great length to his favorite brother Bartholomew, setting forth his difficulties and trials as well as his hopes and aims. The letters had to await the sailing of the vessels he was so anxious to send out, but it was seemingly a relief to his anxious mind to put his thoughts on paper.

"Our Lord knows," he wrote on one occasion, "through how much distress I have passed to know how you are, so that these troubles, painful as they are in my relation of them, were far more so in fact; so much so that they have led me to weary of life, because of the great extremity in which I know you must have been. In this, though, you must count me as one with yourself, because of a certainty, although I have been here dis-

•

tant from you, my spirit has been and is out yonder with yourself, thinking of nothing else, without ceasing, as Our Lord is the witness. Nor do I fear that you or your own heart will doubt this, for, besides the ties of blood and our great affection, the nature of the case and the very quality of the toils and perils encountered in far-distant regions teach and constrain the mind and sensibilities to suffer more under whatever trial may be imagined as occurring there than would be the case were you nearer. All this would be very profitable if this suffering were endured in a case which should redound to the glory of Our Lord, for which we are bound to labor with a cheerful spirit; nor is it fruitless to reflect that no great action can be perfected without affliction. In the same manner it is comforting to bear in mind that everything which is laboriously acquired is possessed and enjoyed with the greater delight. And much more I will add to this same effect, but I shall refrain from writing in greater detail concerning it, because this is not the first time that you have endured. or that I have seen, such trials."

If there is one trait in the character of Columbus which is beyond the attacks even of hypercriticism, it is his unalloyed and unvarying affection for Don Bartholomew; and when we find him thus addressing his brother, in the unrestraint of intimate correspondence, we may safely assume that he is not posing for effect. To allege, with all the circumstances of his own and Bartholomew's respective situations before us, that these are not the words of a brave, patient, and manly nature is openly to proclaim one's own narrow-mindedness.

It was not until the end of the year that he was able to get ready the two caravels which he wished to send out at once. He had recovered them from their recreant skippers, and loaded them at Seville with the supplies most immediately required by the colony. Apart from the mere question of provisions, he was desirous of pressing with the utmost energy the development of the mines, for by this means he could the sooner relieve the Spanish treasury of the burden of colonial expenditure and himself from the repetition of the harassing and degrading experiences of the last six months. The tools and rude machinery suggested by the Spanish mining experts were accordingly placed on these

two vessels, and a dozen skilled miners included in the roll of ninety persons of various callings who were to go out on this advance squadron. But, as the time approached for its sailing, a new embarrassment arose in the difficulty of securing colonists, even on the advantageous terms offered by the Crown. The reputed mortality among those who had already gone out; the interminable delays on the part of Fonseca and his brother officials in paying the salaries and allowances of the men in service in the Indies, whereby their families in Spain were often the sufferers; the active propaganda to discredit the enterprise carried on by its opponents, and the well-known fact of the extreme scarcity of money, all combined with the heavy demands for men for the royal fleets and armies at home to make the task of securing emigrants a tedious one. Columbus exhausted his ingenuity and resources in spurring Fonseca to take such action as would remedy at least so much of the trouble as had its origin in financial remissness. He could not even secure the payment of their past due salaries to Carvajal and Coronel, two of his most devoted and experienced lieutenants, whom he wished to send back to the Indies on the two first ships, and who had exerted themselves to get together the required number of colonists. In a sharp letter which he wrote to Fonseca on this subject, in January, '98, we get a clear view of some of the embarrassments under which he was laboring.

"At the time of my leaving the Court," he wrote, "the King and Queen, our sovereigns, being then together, I told them that, since it was not practicable to provide for the payment of certain persons of rank whom I had brought with me, and since, if they were not assisted, they could not go back to the Indies, it would be well for their Majesties to see whether I could not use for their payment some of the money I was taking, or was going to take out to Hispaniola with me, to pay the salaries of those who were already there. [This I said because] that business was so discredited that, if these men did not go, no one would, and I trusted in God that I should find gold or some other article of value by means of which I could refund the money thus taken and given to them. The King replied that I should do as I proposed, considering the position of the individuals, so that they might do what they had promised."

In virtue of this assent the Admiral now called upon Fonseca to fulfil what had been authorized six months before, and in the course of another fortnight the Bishop complied with the demand. The two caravels sailed from Seville with a full complement on the 23d of January, 1498, and from Cadiz on the 6th of the succeeding month. They were under the command of Coronel and carried as pilots, among others, Juan de la Umbria, or Ungria, and Francisco Niño, both of whom became famous in later years.

By this conveyance the Admiral sent out his weighty budget of correspondence to Don Bartholomew, — the accumulation of eighteen months of busy negotiation and consultation. He informed his brother of all that had occurred to retard the sailing of the new expedition ; explained his intentions as to the southern voyage ; discussed in detail the conduct of affairs at the colony under the régime established by the late decrees ; and gave instructions concerning the distribution of work among the emigrants going out with Coronel. In particular, Don Bartholomew was to expedite the development of the mines and the cutting of dye-woods, as being the two products yielding the largest revenue with the least outlay. He was to seek out all the colonists, whether newcomers or early settlers, who were adepts in these crafts, and assign to them, in convenient gangs, the laborers now being sent out ; while the farm and garden hands were to bring the land around the settlements under cultivation as rapidly as possible. Contrary to the frequently repeated allegation, Columbus exempted the natives from all enforced labor either in the mines or otherwise. They were to pay their tribute, as before, but beyond this were to be their own masters. Exception was always made of the rebellious or hostile Indians. These were to be dealt with as enemies and sent to Spain as slaves, for so the pious fathers to whom the knotty question was referred by the King and Queen had decided. The Admiral even went so far as to point out that these captives might be advantageously disposed of in the Canary and Azores Islands, and in doing so apparently had the approval of his sovereigns ; for he charged his brother that in shipping the



slaves, as in the case of all other exports, express pains were to be taken in seeing that the Crown was credited with its full share. Shocking as seems the proposal, it was entirely consistent with a sincere interest in the welfare of the natives ; and a few weeks afterwards we find Columbus writing indignantly to their Majesties that "the revenue of a rich diocese or archbishopric, and I even venture to say of the richest one in all Spain, would be well spent if employed in preaching Our Lord's holy name in these unknown regions ; but, although there are many revenues, there is not a single bishop who, though they have all heard that here are infinite races of people, has been willing to send out learned and able persons, friends to Christ, who shall endeavor to convert these people into Christians, or at least make a beginning of the work." Coming from so devout a son of the Church, and addressed as it was to the pious Isabella, this outburst is at least free from all suspicion of insincerity. Columbus saw nothing inhuman in enslaving his enemies, but he considered it a wicked injustice that they should be deprived of the chance of salvation.

After the sailing of the caravels, another considerable delay ensued before the funds required for equipping the Admiral's own fleet could be accumulated. By dint of much laborious financiering this was at length arranged, and then followed a prolonged series of disputes, quibbles, and conflicts of authority on the part of such of the Crown officials as were inimical to Columbus and his enterprises. From these unseemly and unpatriotic intrigues Las Casas, who was on the ground, is disposed to exonerate Fonseca, laying the blame rather on certain ill-conditioned subordinates whose powers of obstruction were disproportionate to their rank. The Bishop has enough to answer for, and is entitled to the benefit of the doubt. The culprit, whoever he was, had reason to congratulate himself on his success in impeding the progress of the Admiral's plans and seriously jeopardizing their ultimate success. We are told that, even after the funds were provided and all the needful instructions issued, the work of collecting provisions and materials for the vessels was most onerous and toilsome to

the Admiral, involving not only great labors and grievous trials, but slights and contrarities as great, all the more difficult to bear because they were the work of under-strappers. Bribiesca seems to have taken an especial delight in insulting the Admiral, and on one occasion was knocked down for his pains. The punishment was undignified, but natural enough under its circumstances. The offence was not merely against an irritable vanity. Columbus had caused to be gradually collected at Seville, under his own supervision, the emigrants chosen to go out with his squadron. These, to the number of over two hundred, were drawing rations and pay, as well as the crews of the six vessels chartered from Juanoto Berardi for the voyage; and such an expense was a severe drain upon the comparatively moderate credit at his disposal. When, to this sufficient motive for anxiety, were joined his impatience to get back to Hispaniola and his weariness at the long delay in starting upon his southern exploration, there is little cause for surprise that his patience was at length exhausted, and he determined to withdraw from the further prosecution of his projects, at least for a season. To quote his own words concerning this grave resolution:—

“I greatly desired to take my leave of the business, if that had been loyal to my queen. The instigation of Our Lord and of her Majesty caused me to continue with it. In order to relieve her somewhat of the distress into which Death had plunged her, I undertook a new voyage to the new sky and world which had until then remained hidden. If this, as well as the other affairs of the Indies, is not regarded with favor in Spain, it is no wonder; it is enough that it is the fruit of my labors.”

Columbus had been in Seville<sup>1</sup> since leaving the Court at Medina del Campo, making such excursions from that city to Cadiz, Cordova, and elsewhere as his interests and preparations demanded. He had chosen his six ships, as was his

<sup>1</sup> The curious may care to know that he occupied a suite of rooms in that quarter of the city known as Santa Maria, and appears to have maintained an establishment commensurate with his lofty rank.

invariable custom, from among the vessels of the smaller class, on account of their greater convenience in exploration. The largest was of one hundred tons burthen, four of sixty or seventy tons, and the smallest between thirty and forty. They were to take out six months' supplies for the colony, in addition to the considerable amount required for the crews and emigrants on the coming voyage, which would be a long one by reason of the wide detour to the south that was proposed. He exercised also his usual care in selecting his pilots and principal mariners, striving to eliminate as far as possible all fractious or turbulent characters. The command of the vessels was given to men whom he believed he could trust, and in many respects this fleet was better equipped, both as to personnel and material, than any which had preceded it.

While these arrangements were making, Columbus drew up and executed, with all the formalities known to Spanish law, the deed of entail by which he provided for the inheritance of his titles, offices, and revenues by his heirs male in perpetual succession. This remarkable document was the work of his own hand, and deserves to be read by every one interested in knowing the real character of its author, for it portrays the man with absolute fidelity. No other writing of Columbus so frankly depicts the intimate aspirations of his life and so vividly reflects the influences upon his conduct of the age and circumstances in which he lived. Opening with that invocation to the Trinity with which he began all his formal writings, the Admiral ascribes to divine suggestion his first conception "of being able to navigate and go from Spain to the Indies, passing to the west across the Ocean Sea." After reciting the rank and authority conferred upon him by Ferdinand and Isabella in reward for his discoveries, the cession to him of one-tenth "of all that should be found in or received from the said jurisdiction," and the one-eighth "of the lands and all other things," he relates the finding of "Terra firma [Cuba] and many islands, among which is Hispaniola, which the Indians call Hayti, but the Monicongos call Cipango." The results of his two voyages "will be gathered more in detail

from my writings, reports, and charts." "And because we trust that before a great while a sufficient and vast revenue will, under God, be derived from the said islands and Terra Firma," he deemed it prudent to provide for the future disposition of his offices and prospective estates, "inasmuch as we are mortal." His early departure on a voyage which was to be, in a sense, as great a plunge into the unknown as his first one, was of course the moving cause of his making this entail at this season rather than another; but the profound conviction that, little as the world might think it, the returns from his discoveries would shortly reach such colossal proportions that his share in them would equal a king's income also suggested the wisdom of regulating its disposal. We are wont to call him visionary, when referring to these splendid day-dreams, but we must bear in mind that, when he executed this deed before the Seville notaries, he attached to it the solemn guarantees of the King and Queen of Spain, executed under the royal seals, that he and his heirs should enjoy *forever* the "tenth and the eighth" of all the results of whatever kind flowing from his discoveries. Bearing this in mind, and recalling the incalculable gains which accrued to the Spanish Crown within even fifty years of the landing on San Salvador, no one can justly consider the projects as chimerical or his expectations as unfounded.

The succession was to be in the direct male line, through Don Diego, the Admiral's elder son, Don Fernando, his second son,<sup>1</sup> Don Bartholomew, his elder brother, Don Diego, his younger brother, or their respective sons. Failing the direct line, it was to pass to the nearest male relative; and only in the event of the absence of any male heir in the collateral branches of the Columbus family, "either here or in any other corner of the world," was it to descend to a woman. Don Diego, the Admiral's son, was to inherit the whole estate, subject to the following provisos: One-fourth of the revenue from the estate, up to the sum of 1,000,000 maravedies, was to be paid to Don Bartholomew and his heirs

<sup>1</sup> This effectually disposes of the assertion sometimes made that Columbus neglected his second son, on account of his presumed illegitimacy.

forever, "for his support and the labors he has had and will have in connection with this entail." Another quarter, not to exceed 2,000,000 maravedies, was to be paid to Don Fernando and his heirs. Don Diego, the Admiral's brother, "because he purposes to enter the Church," was assigned no specific share, but was to be allowed by the others "all that he may need to maintain himself becomingly," and he was to receive this allowance before anything went to the others, — presumably because of his clerical leanings.

Having thus provided liberally for his sons and brothers, the Admiral turns to more general endowments. One-tenth of the whole revenue of the estate was to be devoted to charity, — preferably to the relief of necessitous members of the Columbus family and to the dowering of its unmarried women. At a convenient season, as large a sum as was necessary should be devoted to building a church and chapel in some desirable situation in Hispaniola, to which was to be attached a hospital, "the best arranged which it is possible to have, like those in Spain and Italy." This church was to be called Santa Maria de la Concepcion, and was to have erected within it in the most public place a marble block upon which was to be cut the following solemn engagement : That Don Diego, or whoever should be heir, is to labor to support in Hispaniola as many devout teachers of religion as the income of the estate will justify ("and for this there ought not to be any reluctance to expend all that is requisite"), who are to "convert to our holy faith all these races of the Indies"; and as the income increases so shall the number of teachers increase, until "all the people shall be Christians." As an additional safeguard against neglect, Don Diego and the other heirs were required to submit this obligation to their confessor each time they went to confession, and receive his specific assurance that they had thus far faithfully complied with it.

All the income of the estate was to be sent to Genoa and there invested in shares of the Bank of St. George, "which now yield six per cent and are very safe funds." The reason given for this is semi-comical, — "because it is becoming that a person of substance and property should be prepared

to act for himself, and profit by his revenue, for the service of God or for the advancement of his reputation." These deposits were to be allowed to accumulate and grow until such time as Ferdinand and Isabella, or their successors on the throne of Spain, should undertake a crusade against the Saracens for the recovery of Jerusalem, in which case the Columbus fund was to be placed at the service of the Crown to aid in the holy work. If no Spanish sovereign undertook the crusade, when the fund attained sufficient proportions the then heir was to equip an armament himself and lead it against the Moslem. All this seems fantastic enough now; but, as we have said, in what respect was it impracticable, if the descendants of Columbus had received, and invested, say for half a century, eighteen per cent of the fruits of the Spanish discoveries in the western world? When Columbus executed this deed, he knew that they would be entitled to this share and believed they would receive it. His long voyages in the Levant had imbued him with the sentiment, which was still so strong among devout Christians, that the Holy Sepulchre must be wrested from the infidel; and the project was a favorite subject of debate in the years following the expulsion of the Moors from Spain. With him it had been a long-cherished ambition, if it was not actually an influential factor in his original plans. That he was under a vow of long standing to dedicate to it the wealth to be derived from his discoveries is an oft-repeated fact.

The Admiral charges his heirs to support always in the city of Genoa a family of his lineage, so that they may depend upon the influence of that city in their favor, should occasion arise. The reason he gives is, "that from Genoa I came and in it I was born." His heirs are always to use their authority and possessions to the advantage of this "noble city," and to employ them in her defence in any war which may arise with her adversaries other than Spain or the Pope. They are also "to support and serve their Majesties of Spain well and truly, even to the sacrifice of their lives and fortunes," and, in the event of any quarrel arising between the Pope and any secular power, are required to "lay their rank and properties at the feet of the



Holy Father" in defence of the Church. It is evident that the Admiral's belief was that, in the course of time, his family would attain such power, by reason of their colossal wealth, that their aid would be important even to the states of Europe.

Yet there is nothing boastful in the declaration of these intentions. He writes with perfect simplicity and naïveté, as of a future logically assured. He appeals to the grandees and councillors of Spain, "that it may please them not to permit that this, my ordinance and bequest, may be without force and effect, but that it may be complied with as established by me ; for it is eminently just that one who is a man of title and who has served the King and Queen" should have his wishes respected. He instructs his heirs to use the coat-of-arms granted him by Ferdinand and Isabella and to employ his seal, without venturing to alter either. And he directs his successors, as each shall enter upon his inheritance, "to sign with my signature, which I am now accustomed to use, namely : an X with an S above it, and an M with a Roman A above it, and above that an S, and then a Greek Y with an S above it, with its strokes and dots as I now make it, and as it may be seen in my signatures, of which many will be found, and as will appear from this deed." Each heir "shall not sign except *The Admiral*, although the King should grant him, or he should obtain, other titles."

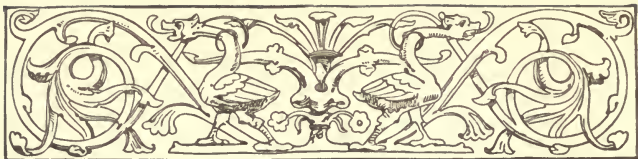
At the close of the document Columbus wrote his signature in the manner he had prescribed for his successors : —

	. S .	
S .	A .	S .
X	M	Y
THE ADMIRAL. <sup>1</sup>		

<sup>1</sup> No satisfactory interpretation of this signature has been proposed, chiefly, we believe, because it is usually read from top to bottom, whereas Columbus particularly declares that the cardinal members of the cryptogram are X, M, and Y. It is in keeping with the singular strain of mysticism which ran through his character and deepened with years, that Columbus should have imposed upon unborn generations the use of a signature whose meaning he did not think it expedient to disclose.

One other provision the Admiral was keenly anxious to have made by the Crown. Of all the charges brought against him by Boil and his other accusers, none had seemed to make the impression upon the King and Queen that did the allegation of cruelty to Spanish subjects. This was the one complaint on which the King had dwelt, in his conversations with the Admiral, and it was the only one concerning which he had thought it necessary to utter a word of caution. Now that Columbus was about to leave Spain for a protracted absence, he feared lest his adversaries might revive the old falsehoods and distort into intemperate harshness every necessary chastisement inflicted by him upon a delinquent colonist. He foresaw that his independence of action in the meting out of justice might be curtailed by the desire to avoid a renewal of the slanders, and realized that unless the colony was governed by a strong hand a revival of disorder was inevitable. In this dilemma he urgently requested their Majesties to appoint some responsible servant of the Crown to accompany him to Hispaniola in the capacity of chief justice. To quote his own words, "I repeatedly entreated your Majesties to send out at my cost some one who should have charge of the administration of justice." For whatever reason, the appeal failed; and the Admiral was left to discipline his people as best he might, with the assurance that every punishment he inflicted would be promptly reported to the Crown as being excessive and unmerited. Well might he exclaim, in after years, that "therein I received a grievous wrong" !





#### XIV.

##### SEEKING THE GREAT SOUTH LAND.

WHEN, on Wednesday, the 30th of May, 1498, Columbus set sail from the port of San Lucar de Barra-meda, near Cadiz, with his fleet of six vessels, it was with the clearly defined purpose of adding a new continent to the dominions of Ferdinand and Isabella before he steered for Hispaniola. Although in this determination he was influenced by considerations both of policy and pride, the bases upon which he founded his expectation of success were none the less the outcome of patient investigation and close reasoning. His pride was deeply involved, for he had but narrowly escaped losing altogether the opportunity of seeking this new land. Nothing but his timely arrival in Spain, in '96, had hindered the sailing of Vincente Yañez Pinzon and the other audacious navigators who were fitting out private ventures of discovery in the Indies, under the general license of the preceding year. That some of these expeditions would have forestalled the finding of the western continent was not to be doubted, for ever since the return from the Discovery it was a matter of argument in maritime circles that momentous secrets awaited disclosure in the southwestern Atlantic. So much had been conjectured by Columbus on the first voyage outward, even before San Salvador was sighted, and all his later explorations had only strengthened this belief. A theory so inherently attractive to the nautical mind was sure of debate and ventilation, and so many capable mariners had been engaged in the succeeding voyages to and among the Indian islands

that most of the knowledge obtained by the Admiral from the natives must have been shared by all. Therefore, having frustrated the intentions of those who had endeavored to anticipate his plans of renewed discovery, Columbus assumed the obligation of himself probing the mysteries of the southern seas. But his rivals were not only those of his own household, for he shortly found himself confronted by an entirely new complication, which threatened alike the integrity of his sovereigns' recently annexed domains and his own preëminence as an explorer. The brilliancy of the one and the vastness of the other had not failed to excite emulation as well as envy beyond the borders of Castile, and both England and Portugal were bent on deriving some measure of benefit from the far-reaching achievements of the Spanish Admiral.

The efforts of the English were directly inspired by their knowledge of Columbus's success both in finding the Indies and in colonizing them. This we are told in so many words by the man who first sailed an English hull in the wake of the Spanish caravels across the Western Ocean. Sebastian Cabot affirms that it was the receipt of news of the "divine" exploits of Don Christopher Columbus, "the Genoese," which stirred his own spirit to attempt a rival enterprise; and in so saying he doubtless answers for his father as well, for the two acted together. At all events, in 1496 King Henry VII. granted to the Venetian, John Cabot, Sebastian's father, a patent to carry on explorations under the English flag in imitation of those undertaken by Columbus, the Genoese, under the ensign of Castile. Certain merchants of Bristol supplied the funds and wares requisite for the first voyage, and in May of 1497 John Cabot, following the lead given by Columbus, sailed westward from that seaport. In August he was back again from his "exploration." In the words of a not unfriendly pen, "he landed nowhere and saw no inhabitants." He did descry land and coasted it for some days. Modern cosmographers think it was Labrador. On the strength of this record we are invited to consider him as the discoverer of the western continent. Cabot himself, again following his great master,

was confident it was Asia. When Columbus heard of it,—as he did at Seville, possibly from Cabot's own mouth, for the Venetian was there soon after his own return,—he only grew the more impatient to get under way. Cabot's little voyage did not affect him directly. It was not in the North that the spices grew.

While the English were putting his theories to this tardy test Columbus was watching an enterprise nearer home which promised to affect his plans far more seriously. Barred by the papal line of demarcation from traversing the Atlantic Ocean and confined by the same invisible boundary to its eastern waters, the Portuguese had equipped a fleet and placed it in charge of Vasco da Gama, with instructions to sail southward until he reached that Cape of Good Hope to which their explorations had extended in '88, and, rounding that, to endeavor to reach the Indies of Columbus by an eastward passage. The Portuguese shared with the Spaniards the Admiral's conviction that he had reached the end of the Orient, but they appear to have doubted whether he was as near the treasures of Ceylon and Cathay as he imagined. If, while Columbus was pushing his way westward from Hispaniola towards the Ganges, Da Gama could, so to speak, take the Indies in the rear and open up an easy communication with them by way of Good Hope, his Holiness of Rome and their Majesties of Spain would find their schemes for monopolizing the products of the Orient sadly interfered with. Da Gama sailed from Lisbon in June, 1497, and his departure was an additional strain upon the patience of Columbus, for the latter gravely doubted the honesty of the Portuguese designs. Ever since his conversation with the late King John, on returning from the Discovery, he had fancied that the wily rivals of Spain had reasons of their own for believing that some great land lay to the west of Africa, and, Pope or no Pope, were bent on settling the question under the mask of a voyage to Southern Africa. The sailing of Da Gama revived these apprehensions and increased tenfold the Admiral's anxiety to solve the problem for himself.

These projects of the maritime rivals of Spain promised

to traverse the whole colonial policy of Columbus. Doubtless the knowledge of them influenced him in reconsidering his refusal to return to the Indies. English, Portuguese, and Castilians were moving in an intellectual atmosphere of seductive mirage, where the Golden Chersonesus, Ophir, and Cipango; the Ganges of India, and the Yellow River of Cathay; the capitals of Prester John and the Khan of Tartary, floated as goals now easy of attainment. They might question the correctness of this or that identification made by Columbus, but they all shared to the full his gorgeous anticipations as to the logical issue of a not remote future; and the other nations did not propose that Castile should monopolize those oriental wonderlands. Hence Columbus not only yearned for the opportunity to bring safely under the dominion of his sovereigns that southern Terra Firma in whose existence he had such faith, but laid his plans for a far broader and more comprehensive series of explorations than any to which he had as yet definitely committed himself. In doing this he argued from the known to the probable with a facility born of twenty years of continuous reflection and experiment. No other, not even the shrewdest and most observant among those who had shared his voyages and councils, had more than a partial appreciation of the problem involved. Although the very boys of Seville, Palos, and Cadiz knew that "the Indies" lay hidden behind the western horizon, the wisest schoolman of Paris and Salamanca knew no more. With the exception of the comparatively narrow area lying between San Salvador and Jamaica, the Caribbee Islands and Cuba, the farther side of the Ocean Sea was yet hidden in mystery as old as the world and as dense as human ignorance. Now that so much had been established, many were willing to try and learn more; and Columbus urged Ferdinand and Isabella to retain the control of such knowledge as was essential to their monopoly of the western lands. He accordingly addressed to their Majesties a memorial in which he proposed, after completing the "new voyage to the new heavens and world" upon which he was about to embark, to undertake "the affair of the Arctic Pole" as well. It was only a



daring dream, if you please,—this first design of seeking a “northwest passage”; but its projector had his own grounds for supposing it feasible. No doubt he was stimulated to this by the reports of Cabot’s voyage, but he had learned nothing from the latter which he had not known before. The one-eyed sailor of Murcia, and Pedro de Velasco, the Basque, had told Columbus years before of a dreary coast spied in the remote Northwest, after a stormy voyage from Ireland, which they and their shipmates conceived to be the shores of Tartary.<sup>1</sup> Cabot could tell him no more than that, by sailing west from Bristol, he had seen the same. Columbus himself had shown that by keeping to the parallel of the Canary Islands the easternmost borders of the Indies could be reached, and had demonstrated to his own satisfaction that by pursuing a westerly course from Cuba the mouths of the Ganges would be accessible. The voyage he now was planning was to carry him to the south of that Asiatic continent; for, to his mind, the latter could not extend as far as the Equator. Since, however, Cabot had reached Tartary in his northern voyage, there might easily be a means of skirting its Arctic shores and reaching the golden lands of promise by a northerly, as well as a southerly, or an intermediate route. All means of access to the Indies by the west were, in his conception, placed under the undisputed control of Spain by the Bull of the Holy Father; consequently, in proposing to essay in succession these several possible methods of penetrating to the famous marts of the Orient, he was planning nothing which was not logical and consistent. As he had led the way in this world-hunting, so it behooved him not to allow others to anticipate his wider schemes of annexation. Our own conceit of the man and his attainments is so apt to be bounded by the narrow limits of San Salvador that we forget the breadth of his schemes of exploration and the persistency with which he prosecuted them.

In starting out to search for the new continent, he took no one into his entire confidence except the King and Queen.

<sup>1</sup> “With the Admiral of the Ocean Sea,” Note E, Appendix.

Ostensibly, he was bound for Hispaniola by a new route ; to divulge the fact that he was going to launch out boldly into the pathless wastes of the southern seas would be to revive among his followers the dread and opposition of the first voyage to the west. His theory was that the land would be found in about the same meridian as Hayti, and the voyage, in consequence, would not have to be greatly protracted. In fact, this belief amounted to assurance, for the lading of his vessels was chiefly composed of additional supplies for the Hispaniola settlers, and he could not afford to tarry unduly on the way. His health, too, was precarious. The experience of the past year had not been of a nature to diminish his tendency to gout, and of late he had been suffering keenly from an attack of that remorseless enemy which had enfeebled his whole system. The long lapse of time since he had received news from his Indian government inspired grave misgivings as to the safety of the colony, and served as an additional incentive for him to hasten his return thither. For all these reasons he determined to make what speed he could, and limit himself to merely establishing, or disproving, the existence of the "great land" in which he had such faith. If it were found, its exploration in detail could be systematically conducted at leisure. It was not in his power personally to investigate all these new regions ; his task was to find them.

From San Lucar the Admiral steered for Madeira, avoiding all near approach to Cape St. Vincent from fear of falling in with French cruisers, as, on the two preceding voyages, he had avoided it to escape the Portuguese. A favorable run of seven days brought him to that island of Porto Santo which was the birthplace of his wife and had been so important a factor in his earliest speculations concerning a voyage to the west. Landing here, he found the inhabitants in a state of great alarm at the approach of his vessels, which they had taken for a French fleet. On learning who it was, they exchanged their attitude for one of welcome and willingly furnished the supplies he desired. Doubtless with some reference to his former visits to the island, the Admiral sought out its little church to attend

Mass, after which he returned on board and made sail for Madeira, some fifty miles distant. Here he was received with open arms and hearty greetings ; for he was well known by the residents on account of his long sojourning among them in past years, and they were proud, in virtue of his later achievements, to claim him as one of themselves. Some popular demonstration of this sentiment was made, in the way of the *fiestas* dear to the Portuguese and Spanish heart, and these, with the stocking of the ships with water, wood, and fresh provisions, detained them for six days. This brief stay in Madeira is one of the few recorded incidents which link that portion of the Admiral's career which is known to us directly with his obscure past. Here he had stopped when voyaging to the Guinea coast twenty years before ; here he had eagerly gathered such fragmentary indications of lands beyond the awesome Sea of Darkness as storm-tossed sailor-folk or observant residents could offer ; and here he had received, with his wife, that dowry of rough charts and notes which had given the confirmation of experience to the speculations of the schoolmen with which his mind was already so deeply imbued. Surely no wanderer ever returned to once familiar haunts and met again his old companions with a stranger tale to relate or a more marvellous experience to unfold.

As if to emphasize the contact with the past, he was called upon to revive for a moment his ancient craft as privateer. Leaving Madeira on the 16th of June, he steered for the Canaries and reached Gomera on the 19th. As his fleet approached the anchorage, he saw three vessels already lying there, two of which at once made sail and stood out to sea. Mindful of the war existing between Spain and France, and recognizing, probably by her build, one of the fugitives as belonging to the latter nation, the Admiral sent some of his own ships in pursuit. The Frenchman was the better sailer and made good his escape, but the caravel in his company soon put about and came to meet the Spaniards. The episode was explained when the Spaniards learned that two of the three ships belonged to their own countrymen and had been captured by the French corsair, who had just

slipped through their hands. The returning vessel had started to follow him, in charge of a prize crew, but the Spanish prisoners on board, as soon as they espied the Castilian flag in their wake, had risen against their captors and retaken the vessel. As he watched the chase and its result, we can believe that for once the thoughts of Columbus were busied rather with the memories of his fighting days in the landlocked Mediterranean than with the grandiose projects of later years.

Gomera, as the very farthest outpost of the Old World, had been his starting-point into the Western Ocean on each of his former voyages. On the first, in pursuance of his long-meditated plan, he had headed his little squadron due west, and held to the parallel of the Canaries with stubborn pertinacity, in the conviction that on that course was to be found the shortest route to Cipango and Cathay. On the second, steering somewhat farther to the south, he had aimed to strike the islands of whose existence the flight of the birds on his first voyage had hinted, and which the natives of Hayti had afterwards said lay in that direction. Both of these ventures had proved preëminently fortunate, from a sailor's point of view, and in seeking the same point of departure for his new expedition Columbus was doubtless counting upon the smooth seas and friendly gales which had so greatly aided his earlier passages. Here he decided to divide his fleet, sending the three larger ships directly to Hispaniola and taking the three smaller ones with him to search for the new continent. His motive in doing this was twofold: first, to advise Don Bartholomew and Diego of his welfare and present plans; and, second, to furnish them with the supplies with which the ships were laden. When Coronel had sailed, in January, the future was still uncertain, and the Admiral sympathized with the anxieties which he knew must possess the minds of his devoted brothers. After consultation with his captains, he drew up a set of formal instructions for their guidance in which his own intentions are exhibited with trenchant emphasis. The three ships were commanded by loyal adherents of the Admiral: Pedro de Araña, a brother of Doña Beatriz

Enriquez, the mother of Fernando Columbus and cousin of Diego Araña, the ill-fated governor of Navidad ;<sup>1</sup> Alonzo Sanchez de Carvajal, whom Las Casas characterizes as "an honored cavalier" ; and Juan Antonio Columbus, a Genoese kinsman of the Admiral. Each of these captains was to command the whole squadron for a week at a time, in rotation. They were to steer a west-southwest course for 850 leagues, at about which distance they should find the island of Dominica. From there they were to sail west-northwest until they reached San Juan — or Porto Rico, as we know it. Passing this to the south, they were to sail by Mona, Cape Engaño, Saona, and so, coasting the southern shore of Hispaniola, arrive at the new settlement which Don Bartholomew was to have founded. Wherever they should land for fresh provisions or water, the Admiral enjoined in positive terms that they were to pay the natives in trinkets for everything received. However little they might offer the Indians, he repeated, it would secure their good will, even if they were cannibals, and they would supply the Spaniards willingly ; but if the latter should attempt to take anything by force, the natives would hide themselves and seek to retaliate.

As for himself, he added, he intended to steer for the Cape de Verd islands ("which the ancients called the Gorgodes, or, according to others, the Hesperides," he explains). From there he would shape his course, "in the name of the Holy Trinity, with the purpose of steering to the south of them until I get underneath the Equinoctial Line, and follow the path to the west until the island of Hispaniola shall lie to the northwest from me, in order to see whether there be islands or lands [in that quarter]. May Our Lord guide me," he concludes, "and disclose to me

<sup>1</sup> Whatever may have been the exact nature of the relations existing between Columbus and the mother of his second son, it is evident that they had the approval of her family. The brother and cousin of a woman who has been wronged do not place their lives and fortunes at the service of her betrayer, especially in Spain. Las Casas—a godly man, if ever there was one—says of Pedro de Araña, "He was a greatly respected man and very sensible, whom I knew intimately."

something which shall be His glory and that of the King and Queen, our sovereigns, and to the honor of all Christians ; for I believe that no one has ever before made this voyage and that this sea is utterly unknown."

In view of later events it will not be superfluous to recall the fact that whoever should follow the equatorial line to the west "until Hayti lies to his northwest" will, at just about that time, fall upon land near the mouth of the Amazon. By their own admission, or that of the most honest among them, Pinzon, Hojeda, Vespucci, and the other imitators of Columbus who successively discovered the great southern continent after he had visited it, had secured copies of the charts and writings he made while upon this voyage. Under the circumstances, it is not remarkable that they all should have reached the mainland. What more efficient guidance would they require?

Having concerted with his captains the course to be pursued, the Admiral led the way out of the harbor at Gomera on the 21st of June. The whole fleet stood for Ferro, the westernmost of the Canaries, which had been the point of departure for all his calculations on the two previous voyages. On passing this island, the fleet divided, the Admiral laying a southerly course for Cape de Verd, and Araña, Coronel, and Juan Antonio Columbus holding to the westward. It was not without misgiving that the Admiral watched the three vessels recede in the dusk, — for it was sunset when they parted, — and, as he bade his officers farewell, he commended them and their charges to the special protection of the Holy Trinity. His care was less for them than for the colony whither they were bound, for he was haunted by the fear lest his people in Hispaniola should be suffering for the want of the supplies he was taking out. The frequent mention made in his journal of this feeling testifies to the persistency with which it assailed his mind.

The Admiral reached Salt Island, the nearest of the Cape de Verd group, on the 27th of June. Here again he was among scenes familiar to him from the voyages of his earlier years to and from the Guinea coast, and the sight of their barren rocks outlined grimly against the brilliant azure of



the sea leads him to remark sarcastically that these islands are falsely named, for he "had never seen a green thing on them." Passing to the island of Buena Vista, — which was yet more sterile, if possible, — he anchored in a little bay on whose shores stood six or seven cabins, most of which were occupied by lepers sent there from Portugal to recover or die. His object in touching here was to lay in a stock of salt and dried goat's meat, the two productions of an otherwise unfruitful soil; and when his boats landed to make known their wants the Portuguese Majordomo of the islands, one Rodrigo Alonzo, promptly visited the flagship to place the scanty resources of the island at his visitor's disposal. We catch a glimpse of the personality of Columbus in the entry which he makes in his journal of this visit: how the lonely official derived much comfort from the good cheer offered him on board the Spanish vessel; how he and his host had a long talk on the subject of lepers and leprosy; how they discussed the merits of turtle-flesh as a cure for the disease, and thence passed to the habits of the turtles which swarmed in the waters of the archipelago. All this is set forth in the Admiral's journal with such minuteness that one can almost see him and his guest comparing notes of their widely diverse experiences. There were some consolations, even in the worthy Majordomo's lot, for he said that in certain years the islands brought him in a revenue of 2000 ducats from the sale of hides from the goats killed by the lepers. But he dwelt with most emphasis on the hardship of having to live sometimes for months, when no vessels arrived from Portugal and the stock of bread and wine was exhausted, upon nothing but the flesh of these animals, or fish and turtles, washed down with brackish water. The Admiral carefully wrote down the substance of his conversations with Rodrigo and his few fellow-residents, and was clearly much interested thereby. It is only another instance of the industry with which he gathered every item of intelligence new to his own experience.

The fleet sailed from Buena Vista on Saturday night, the 30th of June, for Santiago, the southernmost island of the group, where the Admiral expected to take aboard the cattle

intended for breeding in Hispaniola. Reaching port on the following morning, he lay at anchor for several days waiting for a herd to be collected, but secured nothing more substantial than promises. As at the other islands where he had touched, the residents of Santiago visited the Spanish squadron and offered such hospitality as they controlled to the voyagers. Columbus, in accordance with his ingrained habit, catechized them freely and gained information which he thought bore directly upon the present expedition: Twelve leagues to the west of their own island, his visitors told him, was that of Fuego, and some Portuguese mariners who had sailed far beyond it into the southwest had seen, in the dimmest distance, another and greater island, which had not, however, been visited. Other navigators in these same seas, his informants added, had encountered canoes, manned by negroes and laden with savage merchandise, steering boldly from the Guinea coasts into the Western Ocean. Whither they were bound was mere conjecture, for no land was known to lie in that direction; but when the facts were reported to the late King John of Portugal, that geographical schemer had declared that there surely must be lands in the southwest which would be worth the finding. This unexpected substantiation of his own ideas revived in the Admiral's mind the remarks made to him by King John in 1493, when he visited his Majesty on the homeward voyage from the Discovery, and he enters in his journal his reflections concerning the matter. He wished to sail to the south, he repeats, because he looked forward to finding "islands and lands," by the help of the Holy Trinity, and also because he desires to see just what was the meaning of the Portuguese king when he said "that in the South lay Terra Firma." This belief was, the Admiral adds, the reason why King John insisted upon having the boundary between the Spanish and Portuguese spheres of exploration, originally fixed by Pope Alexander at 100 leagues west of the Azores, removed to 370 leagues, for the King calculated that within those limits at least "were to be found marvellous things and countries." As he passed these arguments in mental review, the Admiral's confidence in the success of his undertaking gathered fresh strength.

"He who is both Triune and One guide me in His mercy and pity!" he concludes, "that I may serve Him and give to your Majesties and all Christendom some great rejoicing, such as was that derived from the finding of the Indies, which resounded throughout the world."

During the stay of the Spanish vessels at Santiago the heat had been intense, although the sun had not been visible on account of a heavy curtain of murky cloud which seemed so thick, to use the Admiral's phrase, that it might be cut with a knife. These unfavorable conditions told heavily on the health of the crews, and they began to succumb to the common malady of equatorial regions at such seasons. Fearful of a general outbreak of fever, their commander determined to wait no longer for the expected cattle, and on Wednesday, the 4th of July, weighed anchor and laid his course toward the southwest. He gives his reasons for doing this: that he would thus reach a position due west of Sierra Leone and the Cape of Santa Anna in Guinea, which are beneath the Equator, and because "in that parallel of the world the greatest amount of gold and other objects of value is to be found." Once the Equator was reached, he would sail directly westward to verify the theory of King John and also to prove the truth, or the reverse, of what he had been told by certain Indians in Hispaniola, who affirmed that from the south and southwest had come to their island a black race,<sup>1</sup> bearing spears pointed with a peculiar metal called "guanin." The Admiral secured some of these weapons, and when this metal was analyzed it was found to contain 56½ per cent of gold, 18½ per cent of silver, and 25 per cent of copper. The legitimate inference was that the country inhabited by people whose military arms were liter-

<sup>1</sup> The belief in the existence of a black race on the coast of the Spanish Main became a fixed article of faith with the Spanish explorers. Certain tribes of the upper regions of the Amazon Basin are dark enough to be described as "black," and there is no reason why their ancestors should not have had contact with the roving Caribs or other islanders of the Antilles. Intercourse between the islands and mainland, as well as between widely remote districts of the latter, was far more general in pre-Columbian times than we are apt to imagine.

ally of gold and silver must be of surpassing richness, and it would be an evil day when such an one should fall to any power other than Castile.

The weather was fair and the breeze light for several days. On taking the altitude of the polar star on the night of July 12th, the Admiral found that he was in  $5^{\circ}$  of north latitude. The next day the wind dropped suddenly and a dead calm set in. The vessels seem to have entered, from one moment to another, the fiery zone of the early geographers. An intolerable heat, such as none on board had ever experienced, fell upon the ships, which lay sluggishly rolling from beam to beam on the oily sea. The Admiral had been as far south before, along the African coast, but the violence of the present heat was so great that he records his fear lest "the ships should be burned and all on board perish." The first day of calm the sun shone in all its fierce vigor from a cloudless sky, but for the next seven the heavens were clouded and occasional showers fell. Had it been otherwise, the Admiral writes, not a man could have escaped with his life. The wine-butts burst their hoops, the water-casks sprung aleak, the wheat burned like fire, and no one ventured to go below decks to repair or prevent the damage ; for, if life was insupportable in the open air, in the seven-times heated holds it was impossible. In all this it is easy enough for us to recognize the stifling climate of the Equatorial Calms, where the sky is pitiless, the ocean repugnant, the ship's deck a furnace-lid, and the air a debilitating vapor ; or where the very rain falls warm from steaming clouds, and lazy hulls rock idly to the monotonous rhythm of slatting sails. To Columbus, notwithstanding his forty years of sea-life, it was all new. As day after day elapsed and no change befell, his mind was assailed with gloomy forebodings. It was second nature for him in such stress to mingle devotion with a desire to probe the causes of the phenomena surrounding him, and we find thanksgivings for each shower followed by speculations as to the reasons for such an unexpected condition. If God will only give him wind enough to fill his sails, he says, so that he may escape from that misery, he will steer directly west on the parallel he now was on, until a milder

climate was reached, and then would turn south again to the Equator. It was an error to have come so far south at once. He recalls, "among these glowing fires," that on his other voyages the mild temperature and delicious atmosphere which had so enchanted all who sailed with him, were not encountered until he had sailed 100 leagues west of the Azores, and it would have been better if he had waited to attain that meridian on the present voyage before steering for the Equator. He observed, too, with apprehension, that the ocean was free from the great banks of sargasso which had so attracted his attention in about these longitudes on his former voyages to the west, and that, although the stars were changing and the heavens assuming an unfamiliar appearance, the temperature did not seem to moderate. All this argued, to his mind, a yet greater intensity of heat should he persist in trying to reach the Equator in the meridian where he then was. Moreover, he reflects, the Azores — "which the ancients termed the *Cassiterides*" — are situated at the end of that "fifth climate" into which they divided their world, and all below this was supposed to be too excessively torrid for human existence. He does not fail to reflect upon the extraordinary difference between the present experience and that of the voyages he made in earlier years, along the African coasts to the Equator, but accounts for it by supposing that the forests, rivers, and meadows of the neighboring land temper the heat to those who follow the coast, while out in mid-ocean no such mitigation is possible. It is evident, from the extracts from his journal which have come down to us, that this whole episode was fraught with keen anxiety for Columbus. Despite his philosophizing, there was far too great a difference between this voyage and any other he had made, — and that difference too nearly supported the older theory of a zone of torrid flames, — for him to contemplate with equanimity the long continuance of this portentous and distressful calm. The untoward aspect of Nature led him, as was his wont, to spend his nights in watching and revery; and his old scourge of gout seized the opportunity to fasten upon his exhausted frame and add a new terror to his many trials. Some slight con-

solation was had from the fact that, on the night of the 14th of July, the north star stood at seven degrees above the horizon, which indicated that whatever progress the vessels were making was toward the north, and on the next day he was yet more encouraged by the appearance of some birds and flying-fish, which he took to be signs of not distant land. The same indications were seen on the two following days, but on the 19th the vehemence of the heat seemed to increase to such an extent that all hands anticipated nothing less than the destruction of both ships and crews. This proved, however, to be their last day of suffering; for a favorable breeze sprang up as suddenly as the former one had died away, and in a moment the squadron was once more speeding under prosperous canvas into the now inviting West. The hearts of Admiral and men alike revived under the cheering change, but two real difficulties still remained to vex the former's spirits. The stock of water on board the vessels had been much reduced by the failure of the casks under the fiery ordeal to which they had been subjected, and the stores intended for the use of the Hispaniola colony had seriously deteriorated under the same destructive agency. Either of these accidents was sufficient to limit the voyage, and it became apparent that no great time could be spent in beating about in search of unplaced lands. Meanwhile the ships held their westerly course without interruption. The Admiral did not now intend to return toward the Equator until later on in the voyage, but he maintained the purpose of doing so before reaching the longitude of the Carib islands. When he did steer again for the Line, he would sail on westward until he either found land or came to the south of Hispaniola. In either event he would have to make his way promptly to the colony, both for its sake and that of his own men; for the ships were beginning to show, in yawning seams, the effects of the scorching to which they had been subjected, and their construction was not of a quality to permit of much peace of mind once they began to leak.

Late on Sunday, the 22d of July, the wind still holding good, the sailors were rejoiced to see many flocks of birds



passing overhead from the east-southeast towards the north-west. This continued at intervals for several days, and the Admiral drew from the incident, as he had done in his earlier voyages, the confident expectation of shortly falling in with land. The whole week passed, however, without further novelty. The squadron's course remained unchanged, no doubt because of this hint of land in the north. Each morning the watch in the bows of the vessels expected to see the welcome blue haze looming above the horizon, and each night closed in disappointment. The Admiral had no manner of doubt that land was comparatively near; for the pelicans and frigate birds, which had so often heralded the neighborhood of new shores, were now constantly seen, and not infrequently lodged on the ships. From the presence of all these signs he believed that land would surely appear during Monday, the 30th of July, and when that day passed without novelty he fixed the next one, Tuesday, as the last on which he could afford to keep to his present course. If he did not sight some coast on that day, he decided, he would bear more to the north and west, so as to make Dominica, or some other of the Caribs' islands, before his stock of water was exhausted. He had been twenty-seven days under sail from the Cape de Verds, on all but seven of which he had made fair progress in his chosen direction. If nothing had been found in that time, it would not be safe to continue indefinitely without putting in at some one of the known islands to refit.

When Tuesday morning dawned, with nothing but an unbroken horizon in view, he gave the order to bring the ships' heads to north-northwest, and keep that course, as tending to bring them nearer to the Caribs' islands, without altogether abandoning their westerly direction. The early hours of the day were spent as had been the tedious weeks preceding them, and no signs more notable than those which had been seen before distinguished that morning from another. Towards midday an incident occurred which, considering its momentous consequences, is best told in the words of the Admiral himself as he wrote them in his journal: "As His Divine Majesty," he writes, "has always shown mercy to us, a

certain seaman of Huelva, — one of my servants, — named Alonzo Perez,<sup>1</sup> by chance climbed up into the crow's-nest to look about, and descried land in the west, at fifteen leagues' distance, and what was visible of it was three *mogotes*, or three mountains." The announcement that land was in sight from the masthead was soon followed by the rising of the blue summits above the horizon, and the wearied voyagers gave vent to their joy with an effusiveness proportioned to their recent trials. All joined in chanting the *Salve Regina*, "with other pious verses and couplets containing praises to God and Our Lady," and the Admiral formally bestowed on the yet distant shores the name of Trinidad, in honor of the Holy Trinity, and in allusion to the triple peak now gradually assuming shape before his eyes. "It has pleased Our Lord," he writes, "for His divine glory, that the first sight was three *mogotes*, all united; I should say three mountains, all at one time and in one view. May His Mightiness, through His mercy, so guide me that He may be greatly served and your Majesties derive much delight from this; for it is certain that the finding of land in this quarter was as great a miracle as was the finding of it on the first voyage."

The Admiral indulged in no rash speculations as to the territorial extent of this latest landfall. He had found too many great islands with towering mountain chains to permit himself, without further evidence, the grateful illusion that this was the Terra Firma he was seeking. But, whether it should prove to be this or only another Guadalupe or Dominica, it did possess the distinctive value of showing that land lay beneath the Equator in the West as well as in the East, and that the new world whose gate he had opened at San Salvador, and which Cabot had found reached into the farthest North, extended indefinitely toward

<sup>1</sup> Our readers will recall that Columbus was careful to credit one of his sailors, Juan Rodriguez Bermejo, with the first sight of Guanahani in 1492. In now crediting Alonzo Perez with the first sight of the new continent, it seems to us that he furnished a conclusive answer to the modern allegation that he sought to appropriate to himself the merits of his subordinates.

the unplaced southern pole. He realized, even at this early day, that the establishing of its extent lay beyond his sphere of duty and must necessarily fall to others. The arguments of Jayme Ferrer, who had urged him in 1495 to prosecute his plans of trans-equatorial investigation, and of the older philosophers recurred with fresh force to his mind. In the South lay the greatest treasures. So it had proved in Africa, and so it would prove here, if he might judge by those spear-heads of guanin. "I am now in the same parallel as that from which the gold is taken for the King of Portugal," he wrote in his journal, "and whoever shall explore these seas should find things of great value." This partial justification of his theory of a southern continent he attributes modestly to Divine mercy, — "for there is no man in the world to whom God has shown such grace." He rejoices in contemplating the satisfaction with which Ferdinand and Isabella will receive the tidings of his success, and reverts with a natural pride to the prophecies of evil which "the wicked tongues and false witnesses through envy related" concerning the outcome of his undertaking. "Even should no other advantage result," he writes, "except these beautiful lands which are so fertile and so filled with forests and palm-trees that they put to shame the gardens of Valencia in May, they ought to be held in high esteem." And he closes his reflections with the pregnant remark "that it is a miracle that as near to the Equator as 6° the sovereigns of Castile now possess dominions, whereas Isabella is distant 24° from the Equatorial Line."

He might have made San Salvador, four degrees farther north, his basis of calculation. To have added, in six years, to the petty acreage of Aragon and Castile an empire already to be estimated only by climatic zones, one whose limits might, without extravagance, even then be supposed to rival those of Africa, was a vaster achievement in the closing years of the fifteenth century than it appears in those of the nineteenth. We may search with all the captiousness of prejudice in the writings of Columbus, even when he was presumably in the full flush of a triumphant vindication of his much-maligned project, and we shall fail to find

a word of vaunting or vainglory. He knew far less of geography than most of his modern critics and was unspeakably their inferior in the art of self-advertisement, but he had an uncanny habit of working out by courage, endurance, and patient faith the problems he set himself to solve. That he fully realized the scope of these, his future course will show.





## XV.

“THESE LANDS ARE ANOTHER WORLD.”

NIGHT was falling when the squadron approached the shores of Trinidad, a little to the north of the point of land which had been first seen. The Admiral had called this Galley Point, from a rock which bore some resemblance to one of those crafts under sail, and had altered his course for it as soon as the land lifted so that the coast-line was apparent. As he drew nearer he scanned its every feature with anxious attention, for he half feared lest he should find the regions so near the Equator less inviting than the fertile islands farther north. To his great contentment the mountains and shore were alike covered with luxuriant forests which yielded nothing in beauty to those of Hayti and Cuba. Finding no safe anchorage near where he first made the land, he put about and stood southwards, along the coast, intending to find shelter behind the cape. Darkness closed in before a harbor was found, but in the meantime the Admiral had noticed a number of people gathering on the beach, together with houses and signs of extensive cultivation. A canoe manned by natives was also discovered, and, although they paddled away in fright, there was no question as to the country being well populated by a race at least equal to the Haytians in development. The vessels lay to over night, and on the following day, the first of August, doubling Galley Point, sailed down the coast to the west. By this time the Admiral was satisfied that he was skirting an island; doubtless because, from the cape named (the modern Point Galeota), he could

discern the abrupt angle which the southern and eastern shores of Trinidad there make. The lofty mountains which showed inland, with the long extent of visible coast, satisfied him that the island was a large one. He pursued his way, searching for a place where a landing might be effected and speech had with the people, until a cove was reached where he came to anchor and sent men ashore. They reported that they had found fishing-implements and other signs of habitation, but had seen nobody. They spoke with enthusiasm of the country's fertility, and said that great palms, lignum-aloes, and other valuable trees abounded, and that among the tracks of other animals they had found those of goats. What was of more immediate importance, they had come upon both springs and streams of delicious water, wherefrom the exhausted casks on board ship could be replenished. All this was welcome news to their commander, as confirming the impression he had derived from scrutinizing the shores as he sailed by them. From this anchorage he could clearly distinguish other land to the south, although at a distance of many leagues. It appeared to extend for eighty miles or more,<sup>1</sup> east and west, and to be an island, whereupon he named it Sancta, or Holy, as a complement to that already called Trinity. On the next day, the 2nd, he weighed anchor and continued westward down the coast of Trinidad, sailing close inshore so that he might examine the country as he passed along, and watching meantime the Holy Island, which lay afar off in the south. He began to be impressed by the obvious size of the latter, for it seemed to extend into the remote distance ahead of him: "it must be very great," he entered in his journal. His attention was diverted from it by the approach of a huge canoe, containing a couple of dozen men, which bore swiftly down upon the squadron from the east. It was checked when a gunshot from the ships, and its occupants hailed the white men in a loud voice and with many words, the meaning of which was lost upon their hearers. As the most intelligible

<sup>1</sup> "He might properly have said for 2000," is the comment of Las Casas, "for this was the Terra Firma."



reply possible under the circumstances, the Admiral caused a number of tin basins and other shining objects to be displayed, at the same time inviting the natives by signs to come nearer. This they did by degrees, advancing a little and then retreating, but always keeping at a safe distance. After two hours spent in this fashion, the Admiral sent a party of the sailors up on the poop-deck to dance to the music of a drum and fife, thinking by this act of evident good-fellowship to satisfy his visitors of his amicable intentions. To his surprise they instantly dropped their paddles, grasped every man a shield, bow, and quiver from the bottom of the canoe, and in a twinkling had sent a goodly flight of arrows toward the vessels. The Admiral stopped the dancing and ordered a couple of cross-bows to be discharged in the direction of the canoe, as a warning to the bellicose Indians. The effect of this was as unexpected as that of the music, for they at once laid down their weapons and paddled quickly away from the flagship and under the stern of one of the caravels. The pilot of that vessel, hastily gathering together some trinkets, dropped a rope over the ship's side and slid down into the canoe. Singling out the leader of the band, he gave him a cap and skirt such as the Spanish sailors wore, while to each of the others he gave a trifle of some sort. The Indians seemed delighted with their reception and made signs that the pilot should accompany them ashore, which he, nothing loth, signified he would do. But when he entered his own boat, and rowed off to the flagship to get the Admiral's consent, the Indians seized their paddles and sped away, as though fearful of some treachery.

No one had been so close an observer of all that had occurred during this incident as the Admiral himself. These were the first inhabitants of the southern lands whom he had seen near at hand, and their every movement was watched with extreme interest. According to all the learned theories of the times, supported, as to the older world, by the evidences accumulated in Africa, and, as to the new, by the reports of the Haytians, the natives of the South should be black. Instead, the Admiral remarked that, "although they

are so near the Equinoctial, they are not black, but Indian color, like all the others who have been discovered." If anything, they were less tawny than the Haytians. Of good stature and proportions, they were easy and graceful in their movements, naked, except at the waist, wearing the hair long and banged at the forehead like the Spaniards themselves, and with the head wrapped with a scarf of gaudy colors. Their weapons were better made and more serviceable than those of the northern islanders, especially their arrows, which were bone-tipped and barbed. Their cloths were superior in quality to any before found in the Indies, and the whole appearance of the men indicated a higher type. To the Admiral all these indications were significant. They lent support to the theory that in the unknown South both Nature and mankind were more inviting than in the North, and that his latest exploit was likely to prove his greatest. Every gesture of his visitors was studied with thoughtful regard, in the hope of extracting some intelligent meaning, and at length he gathered that they wished to know, among other things, whether the strangers had not come from still farther south. This interpretation, whether right or wrong, at once suggested a weighty inference to the Admiral's mind: "Toward the south there must be great countries," is the conclusion he reaches, after entering the incident in his journal. And thereafter his thoughts turned naturally to the distant coast of the Holy Island.

Continuing his westward course, he came to the long tongue of land which forms the southwestern extremity of Trinidad, where the coast of that island turns abruptly to the north. This cape the Admiral named Arenal, or Sandy<sup>1</sup> Point, and, as it offered a convenient harbor, decided to come to anchor and allow his men liberty to go ashore. The following day, August 3rd, was passed in this manner, the ships' companies spreading through the neighborhood, revelling in their strange and beautiful surroundings and devoting themselves to the enjoyment of an experience as novel as it was fascinating. The Admiral himself, preoccu-

<sup>1</sup> It is called Point Icacos on the modern maps of Trinidad.

pieced with his desire to compare these equatorial countries with those farther north, committed to paper the result of his own careful observations. What astonished him most was the notable difference between Nature and man in this western world and in the same latitude in Africa. The climate, he records, was much more temperate, as was evidenced by the lighter color of the natives and their straight locks. Indeed, notwithstanding the fact that the sun was in the constellation Leo, the mornings were so cool as to make a heavy cloak necessary for comfort. The forests were far more luxuriant in their growth, coming down to the water's edge as though undisturbed by storms. The rise and fall of the tides were much greater than in Spain, and the currents very swift. The fruits and birds were more varied in kind and of larger size than those of Hispaniola. Oysters abounded in the shallow waters, — an indication of much promise to one whose thoughts were of the pearls and gems of the Orient. The men reported an infinite number of tracks of small animals, which they supposed to be goats, and this also was different from Hispaniola and Cuba, for there were no animals in those countries larger than conies. In short, just as the Admiral had always found the climate change for the better on reaching a longitude 100 degrees west of the Azores, so now he found it still milder and more temperate the farther south he had proceeded in the western world. A comparison between this amenity and the terrifying heat encountered so short a time before on this same parallel farther east was inevitable.

From Point Arenal the coast of Holy Island was clearly visible, the two being separated only by a narrow channel eight or ten miles wide. As the vessels had drawn nearer the western cape, the opposite shores had also approached until now they seemed close at hand. Looking to the west and north, Holy Island seemed to trend away in the former direction until it disappeared in the distance, but in the latter quarter a range of mountains was visible, seemingly on a third island distinct from both Holy and Trinidad. To this new discovery the Admiral gave the name of Gracia, or Mercy, Island. Its contour was so much more imposing

than the comparatively low shores of Holy Island that he decided to make for it, but before leaving the security of his anchorage he wished, as a prudent navigator, to learn something of the waters through which he must pass. Several strange circumstances had arrested the sailors' attention. The narrow channel between Point Arenal and the nearest part of Sancta was broken by several islets. The currents raced through it, from south to north, with extraordinary velocity, creating a series of swirls and eddies which hinted of sunken rocks and reefs. The Admiral noticed that this continued both night and day, and likens it to the fury of the Guadalquivir in its times of flood. To retrace his course against such a constant tide, and the prevailing wind as well, seemed to be well-nigh hopeless; to risk his ships in those unknown whirlpools would be madness. As he was turning this situation over in his mind at night, a new anxiety was added in a sinister roar which, originating in the south, drew rapidly nearer and gathered force as it advanced. To his horror the Admiral saw a huge wave, crested with a line of glowing phosphorescence, rushing upon the vessels out of the darkness. To his disturbed vision it seemed to be as lofty as the ships themselves, and he looked for the instant destruction of his crafts and all they contained. The huge breaker bore down upon them, hung above their counters for a moment, and then, passing harmlessly beneath them, went roaring and spuming into the blackness of the channel beyond, where the startled voyagers heard it crashing and hissing for some time after. To all on board the three ships the escape seemed pure miracle. One of the caravels was lifted so that her anchors cleared the ground, and borne some distance off by the great wave. "Even to-day," the Admiral states in describing this experience, "I feel a chill of fear because it did not overwhelm the ship when it passed underneath her. By reason of this great peril I have called this channel the Serpent's Mouth." As such it stands on our maps to the present time, a mute witness that the feeling has been shared by other navigators who have essayed the passage since Columbus. Those of our readers who have been overtaken by the giant *pororoca*

of the Amazon or the Orinoco, particularly at night, will not be inclined to cavil at the sentiment.<sup>1</sup>

Impatient to leave an anchorage fraught with such dangers, the Admiral sent a boat next morning to sound the channel, determined, if a passage were possible, to force his way through its angry waters and steer for the mountains of Gracia. His men found a depth of six or seven fathoms, and accordingly, weighing anchor, the squadron entered the Serpent's Mouth. The transit was made in safety, and once in wider waters, the Admiral found the sea as quiet as a pond. Looking astern at the angry turmoil through which he had come, he fancied that a conflict was perpetually raging between the waters within and those without, and was greatly puzzled thereby. To increase his wonderment, he found the water of the inner body to be sweet, although it extended farther than the eye could see to the north and west. The problems of the South were even more mysterious than he had thought.

If our readers will look at the map of South America, and follow the coast of Trinidad from Point Galeota at its south-east extremity, past Point Icacos at its southwest, and through the Serpent's Mouth, they will understand the situation of Columbus. Off his starboard beam was the island itself. Astern, was what he called the Island of Sancta, in reality the delta of the Orinoco. Off his port beam stretched the inland sea, which the Spaniards call the Gulfo Triste and we the Gulf of Paria, so far that the shores of Sancta disappeared in the western distance, confirming his supposition as to its insular character. In the north rose the highlands toward which he was steering, separated on the east from Trinidad and lost in the western distance, — to all appearances another vast island. Unconscious of the countless

<sup>1</sup> The critics *acharnés* of Columbus seem to derive some comfort in attributing this incident to "very likely an unusual volume of the river water poured out of a sudden." We have ourselves seen an open vessel, not much smaller than the Admiral's two caravels, filled and sunken by the *pororoca* so suddenly that some of her sleeping crew were drowned. In this case the boat was riding to a short cable, and her anchor held only too well.

streams flowing through the Orinoco's mouths to his south and west, and supposing that he was sailing through another group of gigantic islands like Guadalupe, Dominica, and Porto Rico, the Admiral revolved in his mind, as he swept across the landlocked gulf, every hypothesis known to him from ancient lore or the learning of his day, in search of some adequate explanation for the phenomena surrounding him. It is no marvel that he failed to find one. He had not as yet succeeded in having speech with the natives of Trinidad, and so was without even such little help as could be gathered from an exchange of unintelligible sentences and often misleading gestures. "To avoid scandalizing the country," to use his own words, he had made no attempt to seize any of the few inhabitants who had been seen as he coasted along on the previous days. His bewilderment became greater as he found the water increased in freshness and sweetness as he proceeded, and although he could account for it only by supposing the vicinity of some stream or streams, he could not imagine the existence of a river great and powerful enough to drive back the ocean itself. He had studied the geographical works of his day, had been off the delta of the Nile, and had seen the great rivers of Africa ; but nothing he had seen or heard of would account for the present conditions. The problem was one of infinite attractiveness to him, and he chafed at the thought of his waiting colony at Hispaniola, and its probable need of the half-spoiled cargoes he was taking to it. Small time remained for investigating such great matters.

With a fair breeze the squadron sped swiftly northward, and before many hours had attained the northern limits of the great gulf. The entrance to the open sea beyond was barred by a strait only half the width of the Serpent's Mouth, still further narrowed by three small islands. The eastern side of this channel was formed by the northwestern Cape of Trinidad, which the Admiral named Boto, or Blunt, from its shape.<sup>1</sup> The western side was a prolongation of Gracia Island, and this the Admiral called Cape Lapa.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Now known as Point Monos (monkeys).

<sup>2</sup> The modern Cape Salinas.



Between these headlands and among the interspersed islands boiled and surged the same mad currents which made the Serpent's Mouth so hazardous a portal to force. To dub this outlet the Dragon's Mouth was not wholly fanciful. From this position, the lofty mountains of the so-called Gracia were invitingly near, and beyond them other lofty peaks were discernible, which the Admiral assumed to be different islands. Before passing out into the sea beyond, he proposed to learn something more of the majestic archipelago through which he appeared to be sailing, and, accordingly, altering his course to the west, began to coast along the southern side of Gracia. The country was extremely mountainous, but broken by frequent valleys, each contributing a stream of crystal water to the waveless gulf. From the numerous cultivated clearings which were visible from the ship's deck, the Admiral saw with satisfaction that a considerable population existed, and resolved to hold communication with the natives before proceeding further. The vessels were brought to anchor in one of the excellent harbors with which the coast abounded, and on Sunday, the 5th of August, the boats were sent ashore to try and find some of the people. The Spaniards came upon an abandoned cabin, and saw other indications in plenty, but could find no Indians. They reported, on returning, that the forests were filled with monkeys, and among the fruits which they brought back, the Admiral thought he recognized the mirabolan of the Asiatic Indies. These discoveries — for monkeys had not before been met with in the western islands — revived his thoughts of the Orient, although his men had given him many other fruits which he had neither read of in Marco Polo nor met with in his other voyages. There were great clusters of what seemed to be huge grapes, comely apples of strange shape, smooth-skinned oranges with seeds like figs,<sup>1</sup> and similarly odd but appetizing products of the forests. With renewed interest the Admiral weighed anchor and continued alongshore towards the west, where the sierras bent farther inland and the country was more open. The next day he

<sup>1</sup> The fruits which the Admiral thus describes were apparently the assai, cajú, and guava, respectively.

reached a river's mouth where he again anchored, and this time saw a crowd of Indians quickly gather on the beach. Four of them manned a canoe and paddled out to the nearest caravel, where they were readily seized by the simple stratagem of inviting them to draw so near that their craft could be upset. When they were brought before the Admiral he gave them beads, bells, and sugar, and soon established a basis of good feeling. In answer to his inquiries, or rather signs, they replied that their country was called Paria, and that towards the west dwelt very many more people. As this was the extent of their information, he directed that they should be returned on shore with fresh presents. When they had reached their companions on the beach and related their reception, the whole throng dragged out their canoes and paddled fearlessly to the ships, where they were received with careful evidences of friendliness. They were all armed with bows, arrows, and shields, and the Admiral observed that the arrows had been dipped in some mixture, — presumably poison. They were much like the men he had seen at Trinidad; taller and stouter than the natives of Hispaniola, and of a frank and agreeable bearing. They answered freely all his queries, although neither he nor they understood one another. In return for the hospitality shown them, they brought from shore and offered to the Spaniards some of their native bread, together with earthen jars of water, and of various wines made from their fruits. By the next day a great multitude of Indians had collected on the beach, and their canoes plied busily all day between the vessels and land, crowded with curious and delighted savages. To all some trifle was given, but they cared for nothing but bells. Of beads, and the other trinkets which the islands of the North prized so highly, they made no account. Everything was subjected to the test of smelling, and they seemed to think more highly of brass and its odor than of anything else. They were generous in their offerings of foods and beverages, and brought their most brilliantly plumaged birds to the strangers. The Admiral found some of these that resembled the great parrots of Guadalupe, but what most attracted his attention were the colored cloths used by the

natives themselves. These were, he says, in texture and dye exactly like those worn by the tribes of Guinea and of the Sierra Leone Rivers, "without any difference at all," and yet, he adds, there cannot be any communication with those parts, for they are more than 3200 miles distant from where he now is. Tinctured as was his mind with the theory of the world's division into zones, he found it difficult to conceive how countries in the same latitude could differ so radically in people and productions; hence any pronounced similarity immediately suggested some inter-communication. As, on his first voyage, he had mentally compared every novelty with something described by Marco Polo, so now he compared each new experience with his long-ago observations on the African coasts. Heretofore, he had dealt with regions not unknown to the learned world, new as had been his method of reaching them. Cuba was Asia; Hayti, Cipango or Japan, and the Carib archipelago the outlying islands of the Orient. But now he was under a new heaven and on a new earth, and his experiences were confirming his conviction that this quarter of the world had been as unknown to the ancients as to those of his own time. Had he found the negroes, with their guanin-tipped weapons, of whom the Haytians had told him, he would have felt assured that Africa extended around three quarters of the Earth's circumference, as he supposed Asia did.

On the next day he pursued his westward way, taking with him six of the natives as guides. Passing near a point which he called the *Aguja*, or *Needle*, he found the neighboring country more populous and better cultivated than any he had seen on this cruise. The Indians in his company indicated by signs that in this district dwelt people who were fully clothed, or, at least, so the Admiral interpreted their gestures. Such an intimation was enough to arouse all his early enthusiasm, for where the people were clad could not, in his belief, be far from the great cities of the East. Coming to anchor, the ships were soon surrounded by a multitude of canoes, but their passengers differed nowise as to raiment—or the lack of it—from those seen before. In one important respect they did

differ; some of them wore golden plates hung from the neck. The Indians on board the ships again exercised their gesticulatory abilities, and led the Admiral to understand that gold abounded in that region to such an extent that the natives made looking-glasses of it, like those of glass which the Spaniards used. The conjunction of such plentiful treasure with the reputed race of well-dressed humanity, offered to the Admiral an inducement to make a protracted investigation which proved well-nigh irresistible. What if, after all, Cathay and the gorgeous realms of the Great Khan lay in this direction, rather than west of Cuba? What if Ceylon, Java, and Sumatra were to be found in this southern archipelago,—as he fancied it to be? It was no passing phantasy which seized upon his mind, as he pondered over this tale of clothes and golden mirrors, for it involved the reflections and conclusions of his whole mature lifetime. Nor was it a facile decision which he at length made, to postpone to another occasion all attempt to probe the "secrets" of these lands. He must only view these regions hastily, as he passed them, he determined; for the supplies he carried for the colony at Hispaniola had only been acquired after long struggle and bitter sacrifice, and they must be needed there. It was the same loyal reasoning which had led him to turn his prow northward ten days before, when he had failed to come up to his looked-for southern continent within the limits he had set.

From Aguja high lands were visible both in the south and in the west, about fifty miles off. As these did not appear connected either with one another or with Paria, he conceived that they were also islands, and named them Isabella and Tramontana, the latter name being one of the few traces of his Italian origin which we find in the nomenclature of his voyages.<sup>1</sup> Thinking that the western end

<sup>1</sup> The Spanish of Columbus is very cumbersome, the defect being in construction rather than in choice of words. It is worth remarking that all his writing is cast in a Portuguese rather than a Castilian mould, and that in the only instance where his spoken words have been literally preserved, he used a patois much more approximating Portuguese than Spanish, although his hearers were of the latter nation. His fourteen years of residence in Portugal and her colonies affected

of Paria—or Gracia Island, as it was to him—would be reached now before long, he planned to sail to that extremity, turn northwards through the strait between it and Isabella, and thus make his way into the open sea north of Paria and so to Hispaniola. What he fancied to be other islands were, of course, the more distant mountains of the same mainland along which he was coasting, their bases being so hidden beneath the watery horizon that they seemed to be entirely distant. But to him they were visibly islands, and when, creeping alongshore to a thickly settled savannah, whose fertile charms he thought entitled it to the name of the Gardens, the Admiral dropped anchor, it was to learn from its people something of their western neighbors. The Indians not only were decorated with the same ornaments of base gold as those of Aguja, but they wore a greater variety,—some in the shape of horseshoes, others of beads, others of collars. One of the men had a lump of gold the size of an apple slung from his neck, and all of them wore their hair bound with brightly colored cloths. The women were even more gaily decorated than the men, and among their strings of beads the Admiral noticed many pearls, of fine quality, not like the few dingy specimens which had been found in the shallow waters north of Hispaniola. These people were taller, of a more intelligent type, and of a fairer complexion than any he had met in the Indies; the Admiral says that “many of them were as white as ourselves.” Their houses were of two stories, and their canoes elaborately built, with covered cabins. In every respect they impressed him more favorably than the other Indians he had met. After their fashion they seemed willing to be frankly communicative. They indicated that in the West this kind of base gold was very plentiful, but that the countries were infested by the cannibals, who devoured men. The dreaded word seemed to have the same terrifying effect upon these people as upon the islanders farther north, for they seized the arm of one of the Spaniards standing by and mumbled it, in imitation of the indelibly his speech. He usually refers to Sierra Leone as “Serra Leão,” which is pure Portuguese.

horrid banquets of the man-eaters. As to the pearls, they said, they came from a region on the other, or northern, side of Paria and more to the west, where they could be gathered in profusion. They entreated the Admiral, as soon as they recognized in him the chief of the white men, to go ashore with them to visit their King; but this he could not do on account of his gout.<sup>1</sup> He sent some of his men ashore in the ship's boats, and they were received with much honor by the natives, who escorted them to their houses and treated them with such hospitality that the sailors returned on board ship loud in the praises of their hosts and their method of life. They reported that the men occupied one side of the houses and the women the other, and that their food and beverages were plentiful and palatable. Altogether the experience was a fascinating one, and much as he had admired and enjoyed the charms of Cuba, Hayti, Jamaica, the Bahamas, and the Caribbees, the Admiral found these new lands to be the more favored. "In the whole world," he writes, "there cannot be more fertile, lovely, and populous lands, and the climate is worthy of them, for since I have been in this island I am cold every morning, so that heavy clothing is needful, and this, although it is so near the Equinoctial Line. The sea, also, still continues to be fresh." Here was the *crux* of his problem; the monkeys and odd fruits, the gold and pearls, the traces of clothing and superior advancement in the arts, the light skins and amiable dispositions might all be accounted for out of Marco Polo or the Arabian cosmographers; but who had ever heard of chilly nights near the Equator, or of an ocean of sweet water?

The torrential rains which deluge the equatorial regions of our hemisphere in that season of the year in which Columbus was groping his way blindly off the Northern Delta of the Orinoco, broke up the agreeable exchange of hospitalities between ship and shore which had been initiated at the Gardens. Weighing anchor, the squadron stood a

<sup>1</sup> Both Las Casas and the Admiral mention the latter's landing in person at one point, at least, on the mainland. This has been sometimes denied.



little farther to the west, until the water began to shoal so rapidly that the Admiral feared to venture ahead without greater knowledge of the soundings. Both Isabella and Tramontana were nearer, and both seemed worthy of a visit, especially as the Indian guides insisted that gold was to be found in the former and pearls in the latter. Their intimations as to cannibals had no terrors for any one, least of all for the Admiral, who began to believe his guides meant, after all, by their gestures only to designate ferocious wild beasts and not men. "In these islands which I have seen," he wrote, "there must be many productions of value, for they are all great and lofty, with many valleys and plains and abundant waters. They are well peopled and cultivated, with a race of excellent understanding, as their gestures show." But the old consideration for the colony in Hispaniola withheld him, and he repeats his fear lest the supplies on board his vessels should spoil if he delayed his going. To obtain, if possible, a clearer knowledge of the region ahead, he ordered his smallest vessel, which bore the appropriate name of the "*Correo*," or Runner, to continue to the west and reconnoitre the supposed islands in that quarter, especially with a view to seeing whether the ships of greater draft could find a passage around Paria to the open sea in the north. While this was being done, he lay at anchor with his two other ships, pondering over his strange environment. The freshness of the water in the gulf was his chief bewilderment. "There is no sign from where it comes," he says, alluding to the abrupt nature of the coast-lands of Paria, "for the country is not such as to give rise to great rivers." Next to this was the superior richness of these "islands" as compared with those farther north. Apart from the notable fertility of the soil and the reputed abundance of gold, his attention was engaged by the evident profusion of pearls. The Indians parted with them readily and made no secret of the place of their origin, and the Admiral knew that the Orient produced nothing more highly valued by the merchants of Europe than its pearls. Could he but find the places where they could be had in plenty, the difficulties of revenue-raising would be vastly reduced. All about him,

in the shallow waters along shore, he noticed great thickets of mangroves growing on their stilted roots, with countless oysters attached to these and to every branch which drooped beneath the surface of the gulf. These oysters, he found upon tasting, were white and palatable as to their flesh, "although they require a little salt," he thought. Their shells were not of mother-of-pearl; but he assumed, nevertheless, that the pearls must come from them, because the shells were usually open, and he had read in Pliny that the pearls were engendered by dew falling into the open mouths of live oysters. Here were such shell-fish in plenty, and each night the dew fell with a copiousness new to his experience; *ergo*, here must be at least one place where the much-prized baubles "were born," and could be had in endless quantity. The prospect was an alluring one and he dwells on it with complacency, for it would go far to disprove the assertions of his enemies as to the poverty of resources in the Indies. "Wherever it may be that they grow," he concludes, "they are of the very finest quality, and the natives bore holes in them as is done in Venice." The whole Gulf of Paria was thereupon christened the Gulf of Pearls, and the Admiral consoled himself for much of his past distresses with the reflection that this new source of wealth would bring equal delight to his sovereigns.

The return of the "Correo" changed the current of his speculations. Her pilots reported that they had sailed to the west until they came upon a broad expanse of land, running from Paria clear around to the south and stretching out of sight. There was no channel separating Paria from other islands, they affirmed, and there were no Isabella and Tramontana: it was all one great country enveloping the Gulf of Pearls on all sides. At the western extremity of the gulf they had found four inlets, through each of which poured a river of fresh water. One of these was a very great stream, carrying five fathoms of depth as far up as they had sailed. The Admiral was disposed to contend with the pilots that these "rivers" were in reality only arms of the gulf, separating the several islands one from the other; but they disputed his opinion. These were rivers, they insisted, and not mere

channels. There was no strait dividing Paria from her neighbors, but one continuous territory. It was impossible to find a way out of the gulf towards the north, for if the vessels proceeded farther westward they would have either to ascend some of these rivers, or else run ashore.

If, on the one hand, the Admiral was disappointed on learning that he could not get to Hispaniola by sailing around Paria, on the other all his enthusiasm as an explorer was aroused by the report of his pilots. Every inclination of mind and heart urged him to make the effort "to penetrate the secrets of these lands," to add a new array of marvels to those he had already exploited. Only that one duty to his colony restrained him, — "because the provisions he carried for the people in Hispaniola, and those he was taking for the use of those who were working in the mines gathering gold, would be lost." The memory of the trials and humiliations which he had been forced to endure by Fonseca and his staff in obtaining these supplies weighed upon his spirit throughout this voyage with a persistency which indicates the mental strain to which he had been subjected.

"If I had any hope," he writes in his journal in commenting upon the return of the "*Correo*," "that I should be able to get any more supplies within reasonable time, I would defer all else in order to discover more of these lands and learn their secrets." It was with no little bitterness that he abandoned the idea, for, as he could not and did not fail to reflect, had only a little energy and good will been shown to him in Spain, he could long since have reached these new shores, and had ample time to investigate them before making for Hispaniola. In determining now to sacrifice his own preferences to the needs of his colonists, he registers his firm intention to send Don Bartholomew from Hispaniola, without loss of time, to prosecute the exploration of this inviting but perplexing country. In recording this purpose he takes occasion to call the attention of Ferdinand and Isabella to the vastly enhanced prospects of extended dominion opened up by this latest voyage, and in so doing employs some phrases well worth transcribing.

"Here your Majesties have," he writes, "something noble and worthy of such puissant Princes. It is a great error to put faith in those who speak ill of this enterprise; rather should they be despised, for it shall not be found that any other Prince had received so signal a mercy from Our Lord, or has had an equal success in an affair of such import, or one of such honor to your royal Estate and Kingdoms, wherefrom the Eternal God may receive greater service or the people of Spain more delight and profit. For it is already evident that there are countless objects of value here, and although this that I now say may not be appreciated, the time will come when this undertaking shall be counted as of surpassing excellence, to the confusion of those who have opposed it before your Majesties. And although you may have spent somewhat in it, the outlay has been made in an affair more noble and of greater dignity than anything undertaken by Prince heretofore; nor should it be now abandoned, but you should continue with it and extend to me your help and countenance. . . . I have never learned, either from written or spoken word, that any sovereign of Castile has ever acquired any territory outside of Spain; but your Majesties have secured these lands, which are another world, wherein Christendom shall so much rejoice and our holy faith, in due time, gain such increase. All this I say with the most upright motive possible, because I wish your Highnesses to be the principal sovereigns in the world,—I should say, the lords of it all,—and that it all may so be to the great service and acceptance of the Holy Trinity, so that at the end of your days you may enjoy the glories of Paradise; and not for what may affect myself herein, for I believe, before God, that your Highnesses shall soon see the truth of it all, and know what is in reality my ambition."

It is not to be supposed that the Admiral, when he penned these words on the 11th of August, fully comprehended the significance of his latest discovery. That only occurred to him some days after. But he saw that this was no mere group of islands as he had at first thought. Some vague idea he had that the vast body of fresh water forming the Gulf of Pearls might be the discharge of an underground river, coming from a long distance, and he did not altogether reject the theory of his pilots that a great body of land was to be found in the West, but for the moment he clung to the belief that Paria was an island, although a huge one.

Since he could not conclusively determine this, for the reasons he gave, he resolved to turn back, pass through the Dragon's Mouth to the open sea in the north, and coast along that side of Paria to see whether he could there discover the strait separating it from adjoining islands. By doing this he would be making toward Hispaniola, and, without consuming an undue time, might succeed in solving the enigma of the great gulf of sweet water. He began to doubt whether these southern lands were attached even remotely to the Asiatic continent, and to nurse a suspicion that they were absolutely new to European knowledge; so his allusion to "another world" than that known to his time foreshadowed the conclusion he was soon to reach. In letting his imagination picture the sovereigns of Castile becoming the principal monarchs of the whole world, he was simply multiplying so many degrees of latitude by so many of longitude, and arguing that his discoveries already embraced a vaster territory than that ruled by any monarch in Christendom,—with the promise of infinite extension. It has been the fashion to interpret the references made by Columbus to a "new world," "another world," and the like, as being figurative,—mere comparisons between the familiar regions of Europe and the less known countries described by Marco Polo, Mandeville, and the other early travellers in the East; but this was not always the case. He made a distinction between Cuba, Hayti, and the Caribbees on the one hand, and the southern lands on the other. Those were known to Polo and the rest, because they were part of Asia; but these were as new to all men as they were to their discoverer himself.

It was night, on Saturday, the 11th of August, when the Admiral weighed anchor and hoisted sail for his eastward run back to Trinidad. The moonlight which flooded the quiet gulf afforded all the illumination needful, and the little squadron sped swiftly past the low shores of Paria with their background of sombre shadows where the sierras hid the northern stars from sight. Only a week had passed since he left Trinidad for Paria, and yet in that short time he had been confronted by more and deeper mysteries than any

which had hitherto been encountered. Even the cruise along southern Cuba was plain sailing to this, for there he had only to determine whether the land continued on indefinitely, or not, and he began his exploration with a well-settled conviction that it did. Here, however, was a series of problems which were taxing his ingenuity to the utmost, and for few of which he could find the solution in either his own earlier observations or the books of the schoolmen. Nothing that he had seen or read of in Africa, Asia, or the Indies was applicable to much that he had met with in the past ten days, and still there was enough of similitude to aggravate immensely his perplexities. His nearness to the Equator, and the belief that inhabited lands lay beyond it, only added to the confusion of his ideas, because of the views held by all of the philosophers as to the characteristics of that mysterious zone. His experiences since leaving the Cape de Verd islands fitted with none of the theories with which he was familiar, and thus, little by little, the strange conception which afterwards possessed him began to take shape in his mind. Since the teachings of the learned availed him nothing, he would be his own guide. One must admit that the events of the last six years justified him in rejecting the theories of the schools and preferring instead the light of his own reason.

Only a night and a day were spent in the run to Trinidad, and on Sunday the squadron came to anchor under Cape Lapa at the eastern end of Paria. Here he spent that day and the next, and thought of Pliny's "Catholicon" as he watched the open-mouthed oysters waiting for the dew, that was to turn to pearls, to fall from the mangrove leaves; and noted the neat construction of some native cabins on shore; and examined the fruits a boat's crew brought from the neighboring forest; and speculated on the source of that great body of fresh water and all that it implied. On Monday night he got under way and ran out to the entrance of the Dragon's Mouth, where the channel was widest between the islands which lay between Paria and Trinidad. Why he chose the night for making the passage out to the north is not clear. Perhaps he wished to use the ebb-tide; perhaps



the inflammation of the eyes from which he was suffering was the cause, for the moon was near the full and in those latitudes its light is far more brilliant than with us, while infinitely less trying than that of the vertical sun. He found the same angry turmoil of waters rushing through the strait that he had before observed, and attributed it to the resistance of the salt sea beyond to the exit of the fresh waters of the gulf. The wind fell as the vessels embarked in the turbulent current, and once more all hands gave themselves up for lost, as they heard the roar of a great wave approaching and saw the dark wall bearing down upon their becalmed hulls. In the vain effort to ride out the danger they let go their anchors; but the depth was too great, and they were borne like chips on the crest of the combing bore. Rushing through the moonlit channels, lurching and pitching amid the dark hollows and glittering foam patches, the vessels at length were cast in safety out into the gentler rollers of the open sea which we call the Caribbean.

As soon as he had examined his surroundings by daylight the Admiral steered to the west, intending to follow in that direction the northern, or outer coast of Paria at least as far as he had its southern, or inner shore, — a distance, he estimated, of nearly 200 miles. To the north he saw a number of lesser islands which he named Assumption, Conception, the Pilgrim, and the Witnesses.<sup>1</sup> These offered no inducement to vary from his course, for his one motive was to settle the geographical nature of Paria. The depth and violence of the current sweeping through the Dragon's Mouth had already suggested to him the idea that Paria "at some period must have been continuous land with the island of Trinidad," and this increased the interest of the problem. The quiet hours of Saturday and Sunday had served to clarify his impressions. He would make a final effort to ascertain the source of all that fresh water, whether in fact it came from rivers as his pilots affirmed. This he was not even now prepared to admit, he says, "because I have never heard that either the Ganges, or the Euphrates,

<sup>1</sup> The Testigos and their neighboring cays, on modern charts.

or the Nile brought down so much fresh water." The whole contour of the country, as he had seen it, was against any such assumption, "for there are no lands so extensive that such huge rivers could have birth in them, unless" — and the qualification was the outcome of his forty-eight hours of cogitation, — "this is Terra Firma." If, therefore, after exploring the coast for a sufficient distance, he found no strait running to the south, he would know that Paria was not an island, and "would then affirm that the fresh water was a river; but whether it is or not," he adds, "it is a great marvel." He scrutinized anxiously every opening in the shore line as he crept along westward. Monday night he stood off shore, for safety, and as he was compelled by the excessive inflammation of the eyes, caused by protracted loss of sleep, to abandon the watch, his navigator allowed the squadron to reach too far out to sea, so that when morning came they were close to a large island, which the Admiral named Margarita, — the Pearl. Returning to the coast of Paria on Tuesday morning, he continued his examination throughout the day, until he estimated that he was at a distance of 150 or 160 miles to the west of Cape Lapa. As far as the eye could reach the coast stretched away, preserving the same general features. The pain from his blood-congested eyes was so great, and his exhaustion from prolonged vigils so complete, that he did not feel disposed to continue the search for a strait in whose existence he no longer had faith. Paria, he now saw, although beginning in a narrow point, ran indefinitely to the west and south, widening as it went, as was the case with Cuba. Its northern coast, which fronted towards Hayti and the Caribs' islands, was washed by the same sea as they. Within its borders, somewhere, were cannibals; he himself had secured by barter a goodly quantity of guanin. The only satisfactory explanation of the great gulf of fresh water was that it was the discharge of some huge river, and his pilots had seen several streams of no ordinary size. To account for a fresh inland sea 200 miles long by at least 100 wide, a mainland must be supposed which equalled in extent those continents which gave rise to the Ganges, the Nile, or the Euphrates; but there was nothing

in this opposed to the sound deductions of philosophy, for many of the masters held that six-sevenths of the world's surface was solid land ; and Asia, Africa, and Europe combined still left a vast superficies to be accounted for. All these considerations united to produce absolute conviction in his mind, despite his former tendency to doubt. What he had supposed, a fortnight before, to be a new group of great islands, — Trinidad, Gracia, Isabella, Tramontana, — was that very southern Terra Firma which he had set out to discover. Trinidad, in the remote past, had been broken off from the continental mass ; but the rest, called by the natives Paria, was there before his wearied eyes, inviting to an exploration of its hidden "secrets." His work was, for the moment, done, and he would steer now for Hispaniola to attend to the needs of his government while Don Bartholomew came south to pursue the investigation of the new continent. For this was a *new* mainland, separate and distinct from that of Cuba, — "the other Terra Firma which he had discovered."

"I am convinced," he wrote in his journal, addressing Ferdinand and Isabella, "that this is Terra Firma, of vast extent, of which until this day nothing has been known. Reason brings me great support in this conclusion by cause of this great river and its sea, which is fresh. Next I am supported by the declaration of Esdras who says in his Book IV, Chapter 6, that six parts of the world are dry land and one is of water. This book is approved by St. Ambrosio in his 'Examenon,' and by St. Augustine at the passage *Morietur filius meus Christus* as Francisco de Mayrones asserts. Besides this I am assured by the statements of many cannibal Indians, when I have taken them on other occasions, all of whom declared that to the south of them was Terra Firma. At the time I was in Guadalupe ; but I also heard the same from others in the Island of Santa Cruz and in San Juan [Porto Rico], and they said there was much gold here. As your Majesties know, it is only a very little while since no other land was known except what Ptolemy described, and there was no one in my day who believed that one could navigate from Spain to the Indies. Concerning this I spent seven years in your Court, and they were not few who consulted me about it, but at length only the lofty spirit of your Majesties caused the trial to be made, in spite of the opposition of all those

who impugned it. Now the truth appears, and will appear yet more amply before much time; for if this is Terra Firma it is matter for great wonderment, and that it is such will be considered among all learned men, since from it issues a river so immense that it fills a fresh sea 200 miles long."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> And yet even the always impartial and sincere Fiske maintains that "when Columbus died, the fact that a New World had been discovered by him had not yet begun to dawn upon his mind, or upon the mind of any voyager or any writer."





## XVI.

### FROM PARADISE TO INFERNO.

WHEN Columbus turned to the west, after emerging from the Dragon's Mouth, he was so broken down in health from his prolonged lack of sleep and the unintermitted strain upon his faculties of the month which had passed since he left the Cape de Verd Islands, that he had to direct the movements of his squadron from a couch on deck. In especial, his eyes caused him acute suffering; they were suffused with blood to such an extent that they seemed ready to burst. In his whole life, he says, not even on the Cuban voyage when his thirty-three nights of watchfulness nearly cost him his sight, had he been so tormented. When, therefore, on the 15th of August, his pilots reported the continuation of land toward the west, and he reached the conclusion that this was, indeed, Terra Firma, he equally realized that its further prolongation must be confided to other hands. He had reached the utmost limits of his physical powers, and, in simple truth, could do no more. He had attained a point on the coast of the modern Venezuela south of the Island of Margarita, about where the peninsula of Araya encloses the Bay of Cariaco, or Cumaná. Here the vessels anchored on the night of the 15th, and on the morning of the 16th he hoisted anchor and left the coast steering northwest, in demand of Hispaniola. As he sailed over the smooth waters of the Caribbean Sea, his mind dwelt insistently upon the problems of the voyage now closing. By the help of some associate, or by a supreme effort on his own part, he managed to continue the entries in his journal, although he

laments their enforced brevity. He recites, as if to exculpate himself with their Majesties for any apparent lack of zeal in prosecuting his discoveries, the causes which induced him to abandon further exploration, dwelling again on the necessity of getting his supplies to the colony at Hispaniola before they were spoiled, and adding that his people were worn out with the voyage, and he did not dare to keep them at sea any longer. They were not shipped in Spain for a voyage of exploration, he says, "lest they should have made some objection, and so that they would not ask for more money, which I did not have." He was dissatisfied with the draught of his ships as being too great. His preference was always for vessels of light draught, and the recent experiences in the Gulf of Pearls had demonstrated again their superior convenience. But his chief reason for not continuing onwards, even for a few days, was the fear that his sight was about to leave him. "May it please Our Lord to free me of them," he writes of the tormenting organs, "for He well knows that I do not support these trials to accumulate riches or to find wealth for myself. Surely I know that everything done in this life is vain, except what is done for the honor and service of God, and that is not to accumulate treasure or dignities, or many other of the things we enjoy in this world and to which we are more given than to those which can save us."<sup>1</sup> The disastrous termination of the Cuban cruise was before him as a warning of what might result from overtaxing his powers, and he might well dread its repetition.

As was always the case in his seasons of extreme physical and mental depression, the Admiral's reflections now began

<sup>1</sup> The evidence of Las Casas is so universally, and correctly, quoted against Columbus in the matter of enslaving the Indians, that it may be well to record here the same authority's conception of the Admiral's motives in general. "Verily this man was possessed of an honest and Christian purpose," writes the good Bishop, in reference to the clause above translated, "and was abundantly content with the condition of life to which he had so meritoriously attained, wishing to support himself therein with a modest competency and to rest from so many labors. But what he strove and toiled for resulted only in placing their Majesties under a greater debt, although I do not know what greater one was needful than that he had already placed them under."



to be tinged with that strange brooding mysticism which is so foreign to the Latin temperament. Pondering over the events of the voyage, especially wherein they differed from the experiences of his previous passages across the Ocean Sea, his mind reviewed all the cosmical theories, sacred and profane, which he had read in the course of his long years of study. None of them accounted for the enigmatical wonders which his own eyes had witnessed. He enumerates the most salient of these before recording the singular conclusion at which he arrived, and in following them it is needful to bear in mind that, virtually, all that was *known* of the Earth outside of the geography of Pliny, Strabo, Ptolemy, and the other philosophers he cites, he had himself discovered. When to his own personal observations and the adventures of Marco Polo were added the teachings of the geographer who died when Pompeii was buried, Columbus, to all intents and purposes, commanded the Science of his day as he looked out over the sapphire waters of the Caribbean, and mused over the most consistent explanation of his latest observations. In the order of his reflections, these are the considerations which brought conviction to his mind: (1st) Contrary to the arguments of the ancients, and to his own experiences in Africa, he had found the equatorial zone in this western world not only habitable, but possessing a climate which was far cooler than that of Cuba and Hayti, farther away from the Line. (2nd) This atmospheric freshness was first noticed about the same meridian, — 400 miles west of the Azores, — where the needles of his compass first showed a tendency to fluctuate in pointing to the Pole, and the farther west one came the fresher was the climate. (3rd) The needle fluctuated more the farther north he was, and on this southern cruise its motion was imperceptible until he left Terra Firma. On the night of the 15th of August, it suddenly began to vary wildly from the true north, to the great astonishment of all on board. (4th) The stars were differently placed, and particularly the Polar star and its “guards,” — Ursa Major. (5th) He found no banks of sea-weed in the South, and even when the winds blew there was little sea raised. (6th) The

farther south he came, in the western world, the paler and more intelligent he found the people. This was contrary to all precedent and expectation, for in the Azores the natives were dark; and in the Cape de Verd Islands, farther south, still darker; and in Sierra Leone, yet nearer the Equator, absolutely black, with curly hair, and ignorant; whereas, in this new land, although equally far to the south, they were lighter than any others he had seen, had straight hair, were more courageous, and showed more natural capacity. (7th) There was that great body of fresh water, only to be accounted for by supposing the existence of great rivers, and seemingly without any adequate outlet. (8th) Finally, the ocean currents were swifter than any before encountered, and appeared to tend uniformly to the west, that is, away from the great basin of fresh water.

Nothing in the pagan philosophies would account for all these discrepancies; but the Scriptures, as interpreted by the Fathers of the Church, would. Paria was the extreme western extension of the Orient,—more so than Cuba, which he had already named “End of the Orient,” as we have seen. In the remotest East the theological scientists had, although vaguely, placed the Earthly Paradise, and in that Paradise was a great mountain. Now, to the Admiral, it seemed clear that Paria must be the beginning of that thrice-blessed region; that somewhere in its interior must be that great mountain; that from its summit must flow the huge streams of living water which made the inland sea of Pearls; that either by mouths he had not seen, or by vast passages tunnelling beneath earth and ocean, those waters found their distant way, west or east, to become the four Biblical rivers,—Nile, Tigris, Euphrates, Ganges; that the whole surface of the world in the quarter where Paria was situated swelled gradually toward Heaven, beginning at the point about 400 miles west of the Azores; and that as one sailed west and south, so did one imperceptibly rise higher and higher. In short, the world, instead of being round like a ball, was round as a pear is round,—with a protuberance on one side. This would account for everything he had observed, the Admiral was disposed to believe; for

the farther he sailed on that course, the higher he would get above the level of the rest of the Earth ; the cooler it would be ; the more amiable, capable, and physically attractive the inhabitants, and the more fertile and richer their countries. The farther he ascended, the fresher must be the seas, while the force of the downward flow would create just such currents as he had met. And his loftier elevation would both give to the heavens their changed appearance and cause the needle, in seeking the Pole, to vary from the position it assumed on the lower levels of Ocean.

“ Rampant hallucinations,” “ wild imaginings,” and “ vagaries ” are some of the phrases used to describe these conclusions of Columbus. The charge is as old as ignorance and as stale as bigotry. Even in our own day Gordon of Khartoum wove a dreamer’s web about the stones of Solomon’s Temple ; but the world was none the less the richer by the labors of his life and the lesson of his death, because an officer of the Engineers could not interpret Daniel and the Apocalypse. Columbus, likewise, let his imagination drift to the Temple and the Prophets ; but our debt is not diminished thereby. If the nineteenth-century soldier discarded modern science in his speculations, there is the more excuse for the fifteenth-century sailor disregarding the contents of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Of his facts he was sure, because he was their discoverer ; in drawing from them what strike us as absurd inferences, he was doing no more than thousands have done since and we are all doing to-day, — interpreting facts in the manner most acceptable to the observer’s mental attitude. Columbus was not weaned from a pernicious belief in the Scriptures. He considered the Fathers to be their best interpreters. When he found a theory sanctioned by the Church, which seemed to account for his fact, the influence was greater than he could resist ; it must be the truth. At the same time, he did not lend himself unreservedly to this opinion. It was a revery, a proposition, rather than a finally accepted dogma. As he sailed away from the shores of Paria and found no more islands succeeding Margarita, but only the open sea, he was satisfied that Paria was indeed no island. “ Either

it is a great continent," he writes on August 17th, "or else the place where the Earthly Paradise is." Within a year he learned that it was a continent, and we hear little more of his Caribbean day-dream. At the same time, as in nothing is he more vociferously ridiculed than in this, it is worth while transcribing his own presentation of his idea to Ferdinand and Isabella.

"I have always read," he wrote a few weeks later, "that the world—land and water—was spherical, and the authorities and facts which Ptolemy and all others have written about this earth affirm and testify to the theory, as well by the eclipses of the moon and the other evidences adduced from east to west, as by the elevation of the Polar Star from the north toward the south. Now I have seen a great discrepancy, as I have already said; and for this reason I have been led to think this of the Earth, that it is not round in the manner they describe, but is in the shape of a pear, which is indeed entirely round, except where the stem is, and there it is higher; or like a ball which one may have, which on one side has something like a nipple projecting from it; and I have thought that this part, or nipple, may be the highest and nearest the sky, and may be situated below the Equinoctial Line, in this Ocean Sea, at the extremity of the Orient. For I call that the extremity of the Orient where all the land and the islands end.<sup>1</sup> In support of this I advance all the reasons above alleged concerning the line which passes from north to south 100 leagues to the west of the Azores,<sup>2</sup> where, in sailing still more westwardly, the ships already begin to rise gradually toward the sky. It is then that the mildest temperature is enjoyed, because of the softness of the prevailing wind, and the compass needle begins to shift. The farther one advances the higher one rises, and the more the needle tends to northwest. This elevation causes that irregularity in the circle which the Pole Star makes with its pointers, and the nearer one comes to the Equinoctial Line the higher the pointers will rise and the greater will be the changes in position of those stars and the circles they describe.

"Ptolemy and the other philosophers who have written about the Earth believed that it was spherical, holding that this west-

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.* as one goes from the west toward the east. Compare the reasons given by Columbus on his first voyage for calling Cape Maysi, at the eastern end of Cuba, "Cape Alpha and Omega."

<sup>2</sup> The line of no-variation. See p. 324, *supra*.

ern hemisphere was as round as that one where they were, the centre of which is in the Island of Arin, under the Equator between the Arabian Gulf and the Persian, and that the dividing meridian passes through Cape St. Vincent in Portugal in the West and through Cangara and the Seres Islands<sup>1</sup> in the East. As to that hemisphere, I find no difficulty in supposing it to be other than a round sphere, as they say; but this other hemisphere out here I say is like the half of a very round pear which has a projecting stem, as I said above, or like a nipple on the side of a ball. Consequently Ptolemy and the others who wrote of the Earth had no information about this half, for it was utterly unknown; they based their theory upon the hemisphere where they dwelt, which was a round sphere, as before said.

“Now that your Majesties have ordered this one to be sailed over, explored and examined, all this becomes perfectly evident. For when I was in  $20^{\circ}$  of north latitude, on this voyage, I was directly off Hargin and those countries.<sup>2</sup> There the people are black and the land is scorched by the sun. Afterwards I went to the Cape de Verd Islands. In those regions the people are very much blacker; and the farther one goes to the south the more pronounced do they become, until, on reaching the latitude where I then was,—which is that of Sierra Leone,—where the Pole Star was only  $5^{\circ}$  above the horizon at nightfall, the people are excessively black. After I had sailed thence into the West I found those extreme heats, but once the line of which I have spoken was passed I found the mildness of the temperature increase with such rapidity that on reaching the Island of Trinidad, where the Pole Star likewise was  $5^{\circ}$  above the horizon at nightfall, both there and in the region of Gracia I found the temperature to be of the softest, and the earth and trees of the greenest, as beautiful as in the gardens of Valencia in April. The people of these countries are of very handsome figure, and whiter than any I have seen in the Indies, with long, smooth hair, and they are the brightest and most intelligent of the people I have seen, and are not cowards. At that time the sun was in Virgo, directly above our heads and theirs, so that all this difference is caused by the extreme mildness of temperature there prevailing, which is due to the fact that there one is higher up in the world and nearer to the sky.

“Thus it is that I affirm that the Earth is not a sphere; but it has this variation I have mentioned, which is in this hemisphere where the Ocean Sea and the Indies are found, the extremity

<sup>1</sup> The Seres were the people of Northwest China, according to Pliny.

<sup>2</sup> Arguin, near Cape Blanco, on the east coast of Africa.

of which is below the Equinoctial Line. That this is correct is strongly confirmed by the fact that the sun, when Our Lord created it, was at the first point of the East, or the first light began here in the Orient, where the highest part of the world is. Although Aristotle held that the highest part of the world, and that which is nearest the sky, is the Antarctic Pole, or the land lying beneath it, other philosophers dispute this opinion, saying that the highest land is beneath the North Pole; whereby it appears that they believed one portion of the Earth must be loftier and more sublimated than the other. It is no wonder that they did not conceive that such part should be underneath the Equator in the manner I have set forth, for they had no certain knowledge of this hemisphere, but only a passing suggestion by way of hypothesis, since no one has ever visited it or sought to find it until the present moment when your Majesties have sent to explore the sea and land.

“I find that the distance between these two Mouths,<sup>1</sup> which are opposite one another, as I have said, from north to south, is 26 leagues, — and there could be no mistake in this, because the measurement was made with the quadrant. From these two Mouths toward the west, to the gulf which I called of Pearls, there are 68 leagues, of 4 miles each, as we are used to calculate at sea, and from there the water of this gulf rushes perpetually with great force towards the east, for which reason these Mouths have such a conflict with the salt water. In this southern Mouth, which I called the Serpent’s, I found the Pole Star to be about  $5^{\circ}$  high at nightfall; while in the northern one, which I named the Dragon’s, it was almost  $7^{\circ}$  high. I find also that the said Gulf of Pearls is west of the Western Meridian of Ptolemy almost 3900 miles, which are nearly 70 equatorial degrees, counting  $56\frac{2}{3}$  miles to each degree. Now, the Holy Scriptures testify that Our Lord made the Earthly Paradise and placed therein the Tree of Life, and that thence flowed a stream from which emanate four chief rivers of the world, to wit: the Ganges in India, the Tigris and Euphrates, — which cleave the mountain range and form Mesopotamia, falling afterward into the Persian Gulf, — and the Nile, which enters the sea at Alexandria. I do not find and never have found a writing either of Romans or of Greeks which definitely declares where is the site of the Earthly Paradise in this world: nor have I seen it placed on any map, save by way of hypothesis. Some place it over yonder where are the sources of the Nile, in Ethiopia; but others have jour-

<sup>1</sup> The Dragon’s and the Serpent’s.



neyed through all those countries and have not found such agreement in the temperance of the climate, or the elevation towards the sky, as could lead to the belief that it was there, or that the waters of the Flood had reached there—for they overwhelmed it, and so on. Certain of the pagans wished to establish by arguments that it was in the Fortunate Islands, which are the Canaries, and so on. St. Isidore, Bede and Strabo, the Master of the ‘Scholastic History,’ St Ambrose and Scotus, as well as all the sound theologians<sup>1</sup> agree that the Earthly Paradise is in the East, and so on.

“I have set forth what I believed about this hemisphere and its shape, and I believe that, if I were to pass below the Equinoctial Line, on arriving where the earth is highest I would find a much greater mildness of climate and a difference in the stars and the waters; not because I believe that in the very highest part it would be transitable, or there would be water, or that I could attain thereto,—for I think it is there that the Earthly Paradise is situated, and that none may enter it except by Divine permission. And I also believe that this country which your Majesties have just sent me to discover is very great in size, and that there are many others in the South of which nothing has ever been known.

“I do not consider that this Earthly Paradise is shaped like a rugged mountain, as it is depicted to us in the descriptions of it, but that it is on the summit of what I called the stem of the pear, and that little by little, as one advances thither, one ascends towards it from afar off. I believe that no one can reach the summit, as I have said; and I believe that this fresh water may come from there, although it is very distant, flowing into the place from which I have just come and forming this lake. Strong evidence is this that these lands are the Earthly Paradise, because this site conforms with the opinion of the holy and orthodox theologians I have cited, and also because the indications likewise conform; for I have never read nor heard of so vast a body of fresh water being thus within and adjacent to the salt water. The extreme mildness of the climate also confirms this theory. But even if this stream does not issue from the Paradise, it appears to be even a greater marvel, for I do not believe that in the whole world so great and so deep a river is known.

“After I left the Dragon’s Mouth, which is the northern one

<sup>1</sup> It is clear that Columbus had his own views as to what was orthodox as well as some later members of Mother Church.

of the two outlets and was thus named by me, on the following day, which was that of Our Lady of August [Assumption Day], I found that the current set so strongly to the west that after the hour for Mass, when I entered on that course, until the hour of Vespers, I made 75 leagues of four miles each, the wind not being very strong, but rather light. This further strengthens the theory that one ascends in going southward, while in going northward, as at that time, one is descending.

"I hold it to be well established that the waters of the ocean take their course from east to west, with the heavens, and that when they pass the vicinity of which I speak they gain additional velocity. It is for this reason that they have eaten away so much of the land, whereby so many islands are found hereabouts; and they themselves bear witness to this, for they are, without exception, long from east to west and from northeast, to southwest,—which is a little more above or below the same direction,—and are narrow from north to south, and from northwest to southeast, which is the direction opposite to those just mentioned. In all these islands precious commodities have their origin, by reason of the favorable temperature which they derive from the sky, because they are near the loftiest portion of the Earth. It is true that, in some places, the currents do not appear to follow this course, but this is only in certain particular localities where some land obstructs them and makes them appear to pursue other ways.

"Pliny writes that the earth and sea together make a complete sphere, and maintains that this Ocean Sea is the largest body of water existing and that it extends toward the sky, being upheld by the land beneath it; the one being mingled with the other as the kernel of a nut is enclosed in the thick shell surrounding it. The Master of Scholastic History, in discoursing concerning Genesis, affirms that the waters are but little in quantity; that, although when they were created they covered all the earth, they were vaporious like clouds, and when they afterwards were brought together and solidified they occupied but a very little space. In this view Nicholas de Lira agrees. Aristotle declares that the world is small and the water of but little extent, and that one may easily pass from Spain to the Indies. This is concurred in by Avenruyz; and Cardinal Petrus Aliacus says the same, supporting this theory and that of Seneca (who is of the like opinion), and maintaining that Aristotle was in a position to know many of the Earth's secrets through Alexander the Great, and that Seneca was equally well situated through Nero, and Pliny through the Romans, all of

whom spent men and treasures and exerted great diligence in fathoming such problems and publishing them among mankind. This same Cardinal allows great authority to these philosophers, more so than to Ptolemy or other Greeks, or to the Arabs. In support of the contention that the quantity of water is small and that part of the world covered by it of limited extent, as is held by Ptolemy and those who follow him, the Cardinal quotes an opinion from Esdras in his 3rd Book, where he says that six parts of the seven, into which the world is divided, are not covered by water; which opinion is sustained by the Fathers, who approve the 3rd and 4th Books of Esdras, and which is also affirmed by Francisco de Mayrones. As to this question of the extent of dry land, much experience has shown that it is far greater than is commonly thought; nor is this to be wondered at, for the farther one travels the more one learns.

"Reverting to my problem of the land of Gracia and the river and lake I found there, the latter is so great that it might rather be termed sea than lake; for 'lake' is a piece of water, and when this is great, one calls it 'sea,'—as we say the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea.

"But I maintain that, if this river does not issue from the Earthly Paradise, it does come and proceed from a land of infinite extent, situated in the South, of which to the present time no knowledge has been had. Yet I am very firmly convinced in my mind that the Earthly Paradise is yonder where I have said, and I rest upon the reasons and authorities above quoted."

Alexander von Humboldt has said truly, that "the character of the world's great men is composed both of their own intense personality, by which they are raised above the level of their contemporaries, and of the general disposition of their time, which they illustrate and upon which they react."<sup>1</sup> If we are content to divest ourselves of our latter-day knowledge and place ourselves, as far as may be, in the closing years of the fifteenth century, we shall see in this letter of Columbus a striking portrayal of the intellectual conditions of his day. It is not possible more graphically to depict the struggle which was waging in every intelligent

<sup>1</sup> *Examen Critique*, Vol. III. p. 13. Unfinished as it stands, this noble work is in itself a monument sufficient even for the merits of its illustrious author. It is a great loss to the students of the historical geography of our hemisphere that it has never been translated into English.

mind between the authoritative teachings of the schools and the Church concerning the world we live in, and the irresistible suggestions of Reason. To his Church Columbus felt was due the tribute of accepting her dogmas, in so far as they were obligatory; hence he believed *that if there were*, indeed, an Earthly Paradise he had discovered it, and he honestly marshalled every tittle of evidence which he could summon from the volume of his experience to lend color to the speculations of such "sound theologians" as Saints Augustine and Ambrose. But fealty did not degenerate into fanaticism. With the extreme candor which marks all of his reflections, he sets the *contras* against the *pros* and points out why, if there is no Earthly Paradise, the region he had just left must necessarily be a vast continent, drained by rivers of a size theretofore undreamed of, and extending far below the Equator. We shall have taxed our readers' indulgence in vain if we have failed to bring before them, in the long extract above quoted, the trend of the Admiral's thoughts as he sailed away from the continent he had added to the map of the world. It is a cheap and facile sneer to intimate that his one object, in introducing into his report this argument about Paradise, was to "restore the enthusiasm which his earlier discoveries aroused in the dull spirits of Europe" by "a glimpse of the ecstatic pleasures of Eden." There is little testimony to warrant us in taking Columbus for a fool; still less for supposing that he held a like opinion of his King and Queen. Yet on what other hypothesis can we assume he acted, if, in sending this long story to Ferdinand and Isabella, he was merely concocting an intricate and gratuitous imposition? Why should he be always branded as the knave when he shows a less knowledge of geography than we possess, while the similar errors of Cabot and Vespucci and Da Gama and Magellan are deemed trivial — as they should be? With the words of Columbus, which we have copied, before him the leading exponent of this view of the discoverer's life does not hesitate to affirm that "he had no conception of the physical truth," and he lauds the "clearer instincts" of Vespucci. But what was left for Vespucci and the Admiral's

other disciples to do? The Admiral himself proposed to send back Don Bartholomew immediately, to continue the exploration of the new continent. He prepared a map of Paria and Trinidad by which any mariner could reach them ; he logged the changes in the stars, the variation of the needle, the set of the ocean currents, the height of the tides, the prevalence of the winds. He explicitly rehearsed his reasons for believing the continent to be a great one and to extend far to the south and west, and recorded the evidences of population, cultivation, and savage wealth. "I saw the map of what he had discovered, which the Admiral at that time sent to Spain for the King and Queen, our sovereigns," testified in later years Hojeda, Vespucci's commander, "*and I started at once on a voyage of discovery.*" What difference did it make whether Columbus thought that the Earthly Paradise might be situated in this new continent, or whether he discovered, as one of his pilots mistakenly testified eleven years later, "the Terra Firma which men called Asia"? The gift of omniscience was as rare in his day as was that of Historical Criticism. All he *knew* was that he had found a new and vast body of land under the western Equator. It seemed plausible to him that it might be the Paradise of the orthodox geographers. If it was not, it was all the more surprising, for then it was utterly new. Just what it was, he intended that his brother should investigate and determine. Circumstances prevented this. Instead, certain adventurous spirits, who got hold of his maps and reports as soon as they reached Spain, rigged out a number of ships and crossed the Atlantic to follow up his indications. They found that there was no lofty Paradise, but that he was right in his other inferences ; that the continent did run south and west for great distances, and that its chief productions were cannibals, brazil-wood, and parrots. To that extent they learned more than Columbus, and had a better "conception of the physical truth." We know a great deal more than even they about the same continent, for we can recite the names of its turbulent republics, their capital cities, great rivers and mountains, and the lines of railroad running inland from their seaports. Yet neither

they nor we found the American mainland. Its discovery was the direct fruit of "the wild imaginings of Columbus," coupled with a certain quality which he possessed in unmeasured abundance, and which in other men we honor as Pluck.<sup>1</sup>

Whether Paradise or unknown mainland, the Admiral fully appreciated the value to the Spanish Crown of his latest discovery. In his journal he exhorts his sovereigns to hold these new lands at their true worth, and recites the many evidences which he had secured of their productiveness and wealth. In doing so, he mentions certain pink pearls which he had obtained, "which Marco Polo declares to be worth more than the white ones," thus furnishing us, contrary to the generally asserted error, with explicit proof that he had read the travels of the garrulous Venetian. Crippled as he was in sight, he also followed minutely the movements of the stars and the fluctuations of the magnetic needle; and he records the fact, that in this southern voyage the latter did not show an easterly variation until the night of August 15th.

When Columbus bore away from the coast of Paria, he steered for that part of the southern shores of Hispaniola where he had ordered the new city of San Domingo to be founded. Three days were occupied in making the passage; but when, on the evening of August 19th, he neared Hispaniola, he was surprised to find that the currents had carried his vessel so far to the east that he was off the Island of Beata, 200 miles from his desired haven. On the next morning he sent a crew ashore on the main island to have speech with the Indians, and was not a little disturbed when he saw a cross-bow in the hands of one of the natives who came aboard in answer to his summons. His anxiety was of brief duration, however, for shortly after-

<sup>1</sup> On the same page in which Dr. Winsor so unsparingly lashes the crudeness of Columbus's concepts of cosmography, he reproduces a map of the navigator's day, in which "Paradise" is given a prominence in the East equal to that of Sumatra and the Persian Gulf. Some of us moderns do not feel ourselves to be such very Bœotians because we once supposed that the Nile had its source in the Mountains of the Moon.



wards a caravel appeared, coming from the direction of San Domingo, which proved to be the bearer of Don Bartholomew. The Admiral's squadron had been sighted as it passed San Domingo, and the Adelantado had made haste to join his brother, whom he had long expected. On the 22nd of the month, the four vessels weighed anchor for the new town, and, after ten days of tedious beating up against wind and current, reached San Domingo on the 31st of August, 1498. The Admiral's health was far from restored; but he at least had possession of his faculties, which was not the case when he reached Isabella from his Cuban cruise in 1494. With this exception, there was a dreary likeness between the two returns, for now, as then, he was called upon to dismiss from his mind all thought of his triumph as explorer, and plunge abruptly into the cares and turmoil of a contest with rebellious colonists and revolted native tribes.

The oral report which Don Bartholomew made to his brother of the occurrences in Hispaniola since the sailing of Pedro Alonzo's fleet in 1496 was little more than a catalogue of disaster. True, it began with an account of Don Bartholomew's journey to the southern coast to choose the site of San Domingo, and his subsequent progress through the territories of Behechio and Anacaona, at the western extremity of the island; an episode which forms one of the most charming chapters in the early history of our continent. But the idyllic experiences in Xaragua were all too brief. During the absence of the Adelantado in the west, Francisco Roldan, whom the Admiral had left as Chief Justice of the Island, raised the standard of revolt at Isabella, gathered about him sixty or seventy of the more determined among the disaffected colonists, defied the authority of Don Diego Columbus, emptied the royal arsenal of its weapons and munitions of war, seized the horses and cattle in the royal corral, and marched out into the open country to live as his fancy dictated. The pretext he used to cloak his actions with his own countrymen was, that Juan Aguado had assured him that the Admiral would never be allowed to return to Hispaniola, and that it was not for high-spirited Castilians to support the authority and exactions of the other

two alien governors, Dons Bartholomew and Diego. To the Indians he offered freedom from the tribute imposed upon them by the Admiral. At the bottom of the whole trouble seems to have lain Roldan's abduction of the wife of Guarionex, the Spaniards' ally, and Don Bartholomew's demand for her restoration to her lord ; but there must have existed, besides, a well-grounded hope among the rebels that they could in fact supplant the Genoese brothers in the confidence of the King and Queen, which had its origin in the intrigues and suggestions of Aguado.<sup>1</sup> Although the faction which rallied around the recreant Justice was a powerful and unscrupulous one, it was a minority. The fortresses through the settled portion of the island were garrisoned by men who remained faithful to the government ; most of the settlers at Isabella preserved at least a nominal allegiance to Don Diego, and a considerable body of the best soldiers were absent with Don Bartholomew in Xaragua. But what Roldan lacked in numbers he made up in resolution and daring. Gathering together several hundred natives, to act as bearers and purveyors, he led his band from place to place, beginning with the forts, and, when refused admittance in them, striking into the open Vega, and repeating the excesses of Margarite and his banditti.

Don Diego, hampered by the dread of offending his Spanish sovereigns if he, a foreigner, employed violent means to subdue the rebellion, contented himself with securing such authority as remained to him and sending couriers to Don Bartholomew. The latter hastened towards Isabella, and engaged in parleys with Roldan, which proved fruitless. Threatening him with an assured vengeance in the near future, the Adelantado turned to executing the Admiral's instructions for the removal of the colony to San Domingo, and to the construction of several new caravels for traffic along the coast. The arrival of Pedro Coronel, with his two ships and their provisions, in February, 1498, facilitated the building of the new town, and the extension of mining and

<sup>1</sup> Las Casas, with the original documents before him, asserts that Roldan began to accumulate a store of arms, trappings, and horseshoes as soon as Columbus had sailed from Isabella in March, '95.

brazil-cutting, while it confirmed the authority of the Admiral's brothers in the minds of those who had not joined Roldan. Coronel, whose influence was of weight with all the earlier settlers, attempted to bring Roldan to reason ; but the latter ridiculed his efforts and boasted that, if Coronel's arrival had been delayed a week, an end would have been put to the government of the Admiral's brothers, if not to their lives as well. To add to the anarchy Guarionex, not unnaturally, revolted at the outrages put upon himself and his people by Roldan, and failed to discriminate between rebellious and loyal Spaniards in his revenge. For the safety of the colonists Don Bartholomew had to repress this native insurrection, the unlucky cacique fled to his neighbor Mayobanex, who succored him at his own peril, and the whole central region of the island was again thrown into a desolating war.

At this juncture, the three vessels which, under the command of Carvajal, Araña and Juan Antonio Columbus, had sailed direct for Hispaniola from the Canaries, arrived off the coast of the island. By an error in calculation they had sailed some 300 miles beyond San Domingo, and came to anchor in that part of the country where Roldan and his band happened to be. The rebel chief, simulating continued loyalty to the Admiral, sent to the squadron to learn what its presence betokened. It was no difficult matter for him, in view of his known rank as Chief Justice, to deceive the newcomers into landing a large portion of their forces to march overland to San Domingo, since the difficulty of sailing back in the face of wind and currents was obvious to all. Once the party was landed, it was still easier to gain over the fresh arrivals with promises of unlimited plunder and license, and the three captains found themselves deserted by a great part of the emigrants they had brought from Spain. Juan Columbus and Araña thereupon set sail for San Domingo to deliver at least their cargoes to Don Bartholomew, while Carvajal remained to use his powers of persuasion and diplomacy in convincing Roldan of the perilous folly of his treason.

Such was the posture of affairs when the Admiral arrived.

The new town of San Domingo was founded and well advanced ; the Adelantado had visited the western districts and discovered them to be fertile and productive ; many new mines had been found and brazil-forests located in flattering number ; of promises of future success there was no lack. But insurrection was rife among the natives ; anarchy reigned among the colonists ; Roldan's revolt was absolutely unchecked ; no tribute was arriving from the native tribes ; and Columbus was quick to realize that the disordered condition of this one island threatened to exert a far more potent influence on the minds of Ferdinand and Isabella than all the glory of his new discoveries.

Not even the enthusiastic warmth of his reception by the loyal settlers of San Domingo could lighten the despondency which Don Bartholomew's recital had inspired. Only a few days ago he had, perhaps, been on the very outskirts of Paradise. That he was now at the portals of a veritable Inferno he could not permit himself to doubt.





## XVII.

### PRODIGAL MAGNANIMITY.

COLUMBUS understood the characters of Ferdinand and Isabella far more accurately than can his modern biographers ; he knew that, to the King, the Indies, — now that the first glamour of their discovery was gone, — were valuable chiefly as a possible source of revenue for the prosecution of his French and Italian schemes ; he knew that, to the Queen, their chief interest lay in the vast extension which their acquisition brought to the prestige of her own especial Kingdom of Castile. To her they were a pet, a fad ; to be administered in accordance with her own personal theories and convictions : to her consort they were a magazine of gold and precious commodities unexpectedly placed at his disposal, and unspeakably helpful in the furtherance of his ambitious designs in Europe. Knowing this, Columbus realized the treacherous tenure by which he held the royal favor. He did not deceive himself by imagining that gratitude played a permanent part in his sovereigns' calculations ; the visit of Aguado had clarified his perceptions in that particular. He did not have any great confidence that the glory of his latest achievements would count for much at home, although he exhausted his powers in proving their value to King and Queen. He knew that one argument only — treasure — would satisfy Ferdinand and close his ears to the intrigues of the Admiral's enemies ; and that one charge was always easy of acceptance by Isabella, — that of injustice to her subjects. He found himself confronted by a situation which involved an absolute

cessation of all immediate financial returns, as surely as it implied a renewed and vociferous appeal to the Crown against his own and his brothers' administration of the colony. He could picture to himself the eagerness with which Fonseca and the old cabal would assail the monarchs with this new tale of disaster, and the weight their assertions against "the Genoese" would have in the absence of any golden counterbalance from him. He knew that to them he was a parvenu, an adventurer no longer fortunate, a speculator whose plans had failed egregiously. In his own conscience he was none of these, but he was not to be tried before himself. Whatever he might do, it would be misrepresented, and how could he avoid the use of violence if Roldan's defiant outbreak was to be suppressed? The dilemma was of the gravest; but he met it squarely. The rebellion must be ended and quiet restored in the island. If this could be done without bloodshed, he was prepared to compromise temporarily his own dignity. The true state of affairs would be laid before the King and Queen, and the future left with them. A revenue must be secured pending the reëstablishment of order, and to assist in this Don Bartholomew must hasten back to Paria and obtain the largest possible quantity of pearls. Finally, the Admiral, once and for all, must be relieved of this harassing office of judging the Spaniards. So long as he, a foreigner, was obliged to do this, just so long would his authority be treated with contempt.

His first step was to study the records of the formal inquiry which Don Bartholomew had instituted as to the circumstances of Roldan's rebellion. His next was to reopen this legal process, hear anew the evidence of all competent witnesses and review all pertinent correspondence. To him the result was so conclusive that he felt confident the sovereigns would be satisfied, even in spite of the intrigues he anticipated. Roldan had sent to San Domingo, in expectation of the Admiral's return, a specious letter endeavoring to excuse his disloyalty; but this Columbus treated as waste paper. The facts spoke for themselves and admitted of no palliation. We have the emphatic testimony of Las Casas in support of this position: —



"I have seen all these documents and known many of the witnesses, and all testified that they had never heard nor seen that the Adelantado [Don Bartholomew] had done or offered any injury to Roldan, but always showed him much honor and consideration, and they testified the same concerning the others who had rebelled with him."

While this inquiry was in progress, Araña and Juan Antonio Columbus arrived with their vessels and the report of Roldan's treachery towards them, and a few days later Carvajal sailed into port and gave an account of his unsuccessful attempt to dissuade the rebels from their course. Notwithstanding these unfavorable reports, the Admiral determined to try persuasion before proceeding to extremes, and he derived some encouragement from the fact that Roldan had broken camp and followed Carvajal as far as Bonao, only eighty miles from San Domingo, where he had settled, as if to place himself within easy communication with his old master.

With his own reunited fleet of six vessels, the two brought out by Coronel earlier in the year, and those built by Don Bartholomew, there were now ten or a dozen ships in the harbor. Those of the Admiral were under a heavy expense, being merely chartered from Juanoto Berardi, and he was desirous of sending them back to Spain without delay. As a first measure of diplomacy, he therefore announced that all of the old settlers who wished to return home might do so by these vessels, without regard to the terms of their enlistment with the Crown. This at once knocked away one of Roldan's strongest props, for he had made much capital out of the assertion that the Admiral would never return, and his brothers would keep the Spaniards in subjection for an indefinite period, until they themselves accumulated a vast treasure, when they, too, would abandon the colony and leave their victims to shift for themselves. As the news spread through the settled portion of the island, the colonists started towards San Domingo with an alacrity which showed that they, at least, had had enough of the Indies, and even the followers of Roldan were tempted to join the homeward exodus. To add a further incentive for

these men to throw down their arms, the Admiral directed Ballester, his trusty commandant at Fort Conception, near Roldan's camp, to confer with the rebels, offering amnesty to all, and inviting their chief to come to the city for a free discussion of all differences. To this overture Roldan replied with contempt, saying that he held the Admiral in his closed fist, and that before any negotiation could take place the latter must deliver to him all the Indian captives now held at San Domingo, for he, Roldan, had guaranteed all the natives their liberty and immunity from tribute. He also informed Ballester that in future he would carry on no negotiations with any emissary from the Admiral other than Carvajal; and with this defiant response, Ballester had to be content.

Roldan's own treatment of the Indians saves us the necessity of proving that his concern for their welfare was merely assumed; but that he even thought it worth while using as a pretext indicates that opinion in the colony was divided as to the method of treating them. No such doubt disturbed the Admiral's plans, however, for as soon as the ships had discharged their cargoes and been refitted, he sent on board 800 of the natives captured in the insurrection of Guarionex. Of these, 200 were "paid" to the owners of the vessels as compensation for the carriage of the remainder to Spain. With them was shipped such quantity of brazil-wood as had been cut, and a not imposing manifest of other colonial produce. The chartered vessels were allowed but thirty lay-days by their agreements, and the Admiral was anxious to get them away before the 1st of October, when demurrage would begin to run; but he held them some time longer in the hope of accomplishing some results with Roldan. Meanwhile two other caravels had been fitted out for Don Bartholomew's voyage of exploration to Paria, and these also were held in port, awaiting developments.

An impression had been made upon the rebels, despite their air of contumacy; for a few days after Ballester's return, on October 17th, Roldan and his chief lieutenants,—Adrian de Moxica, Pedro de Gomez, and Diego de Escobar,—united

in a second letter to the Admiral, laying the whole blame for their defection upon Don Bartholomew ; claiming that their original purpose in deserting him was only to await the return of the Admiral, when they would submit the whole issue to him for decision ; but affirming that, in view of what they learned as to the Admiral's fierce anger towards them, they were afraid to place themselves in his power ; and so they *begged to be relieved* of their several offices and salaries so that they might "with due regard to their good names" live as they pleased and be no longer considered servants of the Crown. The Admiral was quick to read between the lines of this precious production, and to see that his quondam servant had no stomach for fighting. Although somewhat suspicious of Carvajal's loyalty, on account of Roldan's expressed preference for that officer, he decided to send both him and Ballester back to Bonao with a response so conciliatory that, in rejecting it, Roldan must put himself in open rebellion against the royal authority as delegated to the Admiral. The terms of this letter, which was written on the 20th of October, are suavity itself. Addressing his "Dear friend," the Admiral refers to "certain differences" which had been reported to him on arriving, and declares that although he "should see it with his own eyes he would not believe that you [Roldan] would work for your own destruction, unless it be in something which was for my service." Greater differences than any which could now exist, he adds, can be easily settled "when you come to me to give me, with a willing heart, an account of your office as all have done whom I left in official positions." There is absolutely no ground for fear of his displeasure, or need for any safe conduct, for as soon as the writer had arrived in Hispaniola he had declared openly that all the insurgents might come to him with impunity, and this he affirms afresh. As to Roldan and his people going to Spain, the ships destined for the voyage had already been held eighteen days beyond their sailing time for this very purpose, and they would be held still longer but for the Indians on board, who were dying off. The writer then makes a friendly appeal to Roldan to weigh well the harm he is doing himself, particularly in the estimation of the King and Queen, to

whom the Admiral had so especially recommended the abilities and fidelity of the Chief Justice when recently at the royal Court, "for I gave them your name before any other when they asked me about the persons out here in whom the Adelantado could have confidence and trust, and so exalted your services that I am grieved now to think that they must hear so different an account by these very ships. See promptly," the Admiral urges, "what can be done or what the situation calls for, and let me know, for the ships have already sailed." This missive was duly delivered to Roldan by Ballester and Carvajal, and the latter reinforced it by so many and such convincing arguments that Roldan and his lieutenants were disposed to accept the Admiral's offer, and go to him for the purpose of reaching a composition of their dispute. But the rank and file opposed this, especially the deserters from the three caravels, declaring that if one went all must go, and that a general safe-conduct in writing must be sent them by the Admiral before they would place themselves in his power. To this Roldan, Moxica, and their colleagues were forced to assent, assuring the Admiral's commissioners that as soon as the warranty was received they would all proceed at once to San Domingo, and giving them a letter to their principal stating the conditions upon which the rebels would surrender. Carvajal returned with this to the city, leaving Ballester in his fort at Conception. The latter wrote to his commander warmly eulogizing Carvajal's course as being "so devoted to the service of God, their Majesties and your Worship that neither Solomon nor any other Doctor could find any improvement to make in it." He also urged the Admiral to accept the proposals made by Roldan, distasteful though they were, for he had observed many of the commoner sort of colonists passing by Conception on their way to join the rebels, and feared that in time the Admiral would be deserted by all but the comparatively small number of men of rank and personal retainers who surrounded him. Columbus did not relish this counsel, or the report made by Carvajal, and when he read Roldan's letter his anger rose to a white heat. These were the conditions on which alone

the rebels would agree to a conference : they were afraid Don Bartholomew would violate the Admiral's verbal safeguard and do them harm, and therefore "since there is no cure for anything after it is done," — to quote Roldan's words, — they demanded that the Admiral sign the passport for Roldan and his adjutants *which they enclosed*; that Don Bartholomew should solemnly swear to Carvajal and certain other cavaliers to respect the same as long as the rebels were in San Domingo and during the journey there and back, and that this oath should be signed by Carvajal and his companions. On these terms and these only would these gentry trust the Admiral and his brother. When Columbus read them, he vowed to bring the traitors to their senses by other methods than those of negotiation, and he took measures looking to an offensive campaign. But when he caused a private count to be made of the force upon which he could depend in the event of marching against the outlaws, he found that not more than seventy men were to be surely relied on under all circumstances. Putting the best face upon the matter he, accordingly, on the 26th of October, published two proclamations ; one guaranteeing to Roldan free and safe passage to and from San Domingo, and the other offering amnesty to all of the rebels and passage to Spain for such as deserved it, provided they reported at San Domingo within thirty days. Having done this, he could do no more than wait for the result.

When Ballester returned from his first fruitless mission, the Admiral, disappointed in his hopes of being able to announce the subjugation of the rebellion, gave orders for the homeward-bound caravels, five in number, to get under way and make all possible speed for Spain. They sailed on the 18th of October, carrying, besides the human and other cargo before mentioned, a large number of returning colonists. Many of these were at heart friendly to Roldan ; some of them, no doubt, were the bearers of letters from him and his sympathizers to influential personages at Court, if not to the Crown direct. To counteract these representations Columbus addressed two long communications to Ferdinand and Isabella, one relating to the voyage lately ended, and the

other to the condition of the island as he found it upon his arrival. The first letter we have already quoted from extensively, as well as from the journal which accompanied it. The Admiral also forwarded with it the map he had made of Trinidad and Paria, showing their relation to the islands of the earlier discoveries and the course to be sailed to reach the new lands. He sent also the trophies of his cruise along the Parian coasts, — golden ornaments, a parcel of 160 or 170 pearls ("although the quantity of pearls and gold be small," he wrote, "I send them by reason of their quality, since until this time no one has seen pearls come out of the West"), and some of the colored cloths which the natives of Paria wore in lieu of more elaborate toilettes. In the same letter he reported that he had three caravels all ready for Don Bartholomew to continue the exploration of Paria, and that it was his intention to have them sail on the same day as the five ships bound for Spain, and spend six months in ascertaining the extent of the new continent; but that for the moment he was keeping his brother at his side until this affair of Roldan's was settled. The Adelantado was a man of resources and an accomplished soldier, and in the event of hostilities his presence would be essential.

In the second letter he dwelt upon Roldan's rebellion and the irreparable damage it had caused the royal interests in the Indies. This fellow, he stated, had set at naught the authority of Crown and Viceroy, and thrown the whole western part of the island into confusion. Moving from place to place, he robbed the Indians, violated their houses, kidnapped their wives and daughters, impressed into his service as many natives as he wanted, and treated with brutal cruelty those who hesitated to follow him. Other iniquities were perpetrated which affronted the Admiral more than they shall ourselves; these outlaws never confessed, ate meat on Saturdays, and totally neglected the offices of the Church. The country, he complains, is the best in the world for vagabonds, and such most of the colonists were becoming under the example set by Roldan. He does not look for much improvement until some worthy priests shall come out "rather to reform the faith of the Christians than to implant it in the Indians,"



and until he has been reinforced by new settlers, "of which 50 or 60 should come out with every fleet, while I send back as many of the vicious and idle, as I am now doing." He declares frankly that he hardly dares to enforce the needful discipline, because "as a poor foreigner I am hated, charged with mistakes in settling the country, in my treatment of the people, and in numberless other things." He entreats his sovereigns, and repeats the entreaty several times, to send out "some learned man, a person experienced in administering justice," so that he might have the warrant of a Castilian court in proceeding against Castilian subjects. Relating his abortive negotiations with Roldan, he says the latter flatly rejected the proffered pardon, claiming he had done nothing requiring forgiveness, and that in any event the Admiral was a partial judge, since the quarrel was between his own brother and Roldan. The Admiral therefore intended to propose to the rebel leader that each side should present its case directly to the Crown; the Admiral through Ballester and Carvajal, and Roldan through such envoys as he might elect; that, while these commissioners were in Spain arguing the question, the rebels should return to their allegiance and all continue as originally; but if they did not feel safe in doing this, that they should pass over to Porto Rico and there await the royal decision. By doing this he hoped to free Hispaniola from the curse of their misdeeds. In closing this recital, he uses the phrase which in the estimation of Las Casas cost him the government of the New World. "If these Justices," he writes, referring to Roldan and recreant colleagues, "do not come to an agreement with me, I am going to do my utmost to destroy them." Admiral and Viceroy though he was, he was a foreigner; rebels and bandits though they had become, they were Castilians, free subjects of the jealous King and Queen whom he was addressing.

Turning to the burning question of revenue, the Admiral inveighs bitterly against those who had impeded for so long his departure from Spain:—

"May God pardon those at the Court and in Seville," he writes, "who were the cause of delaying so long my despatch, because if I had come here in time,—as I could easily have

done within a year and even sooner, — the Indians would not have revolted and refused to pay the tributes they used to pay. I always said that it would be necessary to follow them up for three or four years, until they should be well accustomed to this, for we ought to suppose that they would otherwise learn their own strength."

He avers that he will devote himself to reëstablishing the former order of things, and that meantime real progress had been made by the colony as a whole; for the Spaniards had learned to live on the native foods; their cattle, sheep, swine, and fowls were increasing rapidly in number; their life was far less burdensome than at first; and, when labor should be more plentiful, great results were assured from cultivating the soil. He points out that Roldan's following, which with his native servants numbered sometimes 1000 men, had no difficulty in sustaining themselves; whence he argues in favor of allotting to each colonist the laborers necessary to till his portion of land.

"I beg your Majesties," he adds farther on, "to allow these people to be utilized for a year or two now, until the colony is firmly established, for it is already well under way. You may see that all the seafaring folk and most of the landsmen are satisfied, and only lately two or three of the ship-masters who sailed announced that they would take to Seville as many slaves as any one desired who would pay 1500 maravedies for the passage of each, to be deducted from the product of the sale. I accepted the offer for all and undertook to give them a cargo, for thus the vessels will return and bring supplies and other things which are necessary here, and so the business of the colony will advance. At present it is in a very bad way, for the colonists will not work, nor the Indians pay any tribute, by reason of what has occurred, and of my absence. The Adelantado has not been able to accomplish more than he has done, for he had no one near him in whom he could trust; all complained and cursed the enterprise, saying that they had been out here five years and had not enough even to buy a shirt. But now I have revived their energies, and what I say to them seems to be reasonable: that they shall all be soon paid and receive their pay regularly in the future."

In making this suggestion, the Admiral was adopting a measure which Don Bartholomew had initiated to offset the

attractions held out to the colonists by the rebels. The idle life of easy license led by the latter was contrasted by the loyal settlers with their own hard lot, and to pacify these the Adelantado had granted to them as many Indians, from among the captives or from those who refused tribute, as each Spaniard required to cultivate his land, or do his work. In asking the King and Queen to sanction this arrangement for a season, Columbus intended no more than to continue an arrangement the abrupt cessation of which would revive discontent; but in his allusion to the offer of the ship-master he was referring to a slave-trade pure and simple. The pay due the colonists by the Crown was sadly in arrears; the colonists were aware that the island produced no revenue, while the Admiral knew that there were no other means available either in Spain or Hispaniola for the payment. To retain the majority of Spaniards in their allegiance without compensation, when Roldan was offering them their share of Xaragua for nothing, was out of the question. The only solution of the financial difficulty was the one so common among the Portuguese in Africa, — to send slaves back and obtain funds from their sale with which to maintain the colony for the nonce. The proposal was naturally acceptable to the colonists, for they all knew that slaves on board ship were as good as money in hand; hence the readiness with which they accepted the plan. The Admiral had his own reasons for believing it would not be rejected by the King and Queen. The comparative ease with which this financial problem was solved was probably the cause of the ampler scheme he proceeded to unfold to his sovereigns. Perhaps, after all, a revenue might be found immediately, without waiting for the restoration of the tribute or the gathering of gold and pearls. If so, he knew that Ferdinand at least would turn a deaf ear to the calumnies of those who sought the Admiral's overthrow. If 600 slaves had been so readily sent to Spain, why not more, gathered from the insurgent tribes, the cannibals and the districts which were contumacious in the matter of revenue? The idea was as old as Commerce itself; it was peculiarly familiar to Spanish minds, and that it possessed no horror either to

Columbus or his royal patrons is evidenced by the excessive bluntness with which he advocated it.

"From here may be sent," he wrote, "with the sanction of the Holy Trinity,<sup>1</sup> as many slaves and as much brazil-wood as can be sold. Of these slaves, if what I have heard is correct, they tell me 4000 can be disposed of, which at a low valuation will amount to 20,000,000 maravedies; and 4000 hundredweight of brazil will amount to as much more, the cost of which here will be 6,000,000 maravedies. Thus, at first sight, 40,000,000 maravedies would be secured, if this should issue as stated. The argument which they use in support of it certainly seems sound, because in Castile, Portugal, Aragon, Italy, Sicily, the Portuguese and Aragonese Islands and the Canaries many slaves are employed, and I believe that already from Guinea not so many are coming as formerly. Even if they should come, one Indian is worth three negroes, as any one may see. When I was lately at the Cape de Verd Islands, where the people have a large traffic in slaves and are constantly sending ships to procure them,—for they are at the very door,—I observed that 8000 maravedies was asked for the poorest specimens. For the brazil-wood, they say that in Castile, Aragon, Venice, Genoa, France, Flanders, and England there is a great demand; so that from these two sources, according to my informants, these 40,000,000 maravedies can be obtained, unless vessels should be lacking for the trade, and these will not fail I am sure, under Our Lord's blessing, once they find the voyage to be profitable."

To make the proposition unmistakably business-like, the Admiral adds, "Even if some of the slaves die at first it will not be always thus, for so used the negroes and the Canary Islanders at the beginning; and these Indians offer still a greater advantage over them, since one who survives will not be sold by his owner for the first price that is offered." Who the "informants" were who advocated this cold-blooded traffic with the Admiral it is idle to inquire. He never shrank from the consequences of his convictions. In making this proposal to Ferdinand and Isabella he was reasonably sure of its reception, knowing that to them, as to him and the rest of Europe, the slaves would be dealt with

<sup>1</sup> The seeming blasphemy is a conventional phrase. To this day one Portuguese thief will say to another, "I'll join you in that job to-night, if God pleases."

as merchandise, as much as brazil-wood, — precisely as he coupled them in his letter. We have already remarked that the little flicker of much belauded “humanity” shown by Isabella anent the enslaved Indians was due to her anger at a presumed invasion of her jealously guarded prerogatives as sovereign of Castile. It was satisfied with the return of just nineteen natives to Hispaniola, out of a total of several thousands scattered through the fields and galleys of Spain and Portugal. We have quoted the Admiral’s own words in our desire to show our readers the man as he was. Those who care to objurgate him as a “slave driver” will find it a safer and more agreeable — if less logical and consistent — task than would be a like criticism of those of their own neighbors who have bought and sold their darker brethren in other times and seasons.

Columbus was far more concerned in the effect his failure to make a sufficient remittance to the royal treasury would have, than in any possibility of disagreement between his sovereigns and himself as to the form thereof. With the memory of his late experience with Fonseca and Bribiesca fresh in his mind, he sought to forestall the embarrassments which he felt sure they would continue to create.

“I entreat your Majesties,” was his closing adjuration, “to order that the persons who have charge of this undertaking in Seville be not hostile to it and do not obstruct it; because it would have been yet more prosperous if my fortune had procured that some one who was well disposed toward it had been in charge; or at least that the person in authority had not been opposed to it and sought to ruin and defame it, encouraging those who were inimical and setting himself against those who were favorable, for, as we constantly see, a good reputation, next to God, is what makes things successful.”

Fonseca, to whom all the Admiral’s correspondence sooner or later found its way, must have smiled significantly in his chair at Seville as he read this appeal from the far-off Indies.

The departure of the five ships bearing, as he knew, the Admiral’s version of his rebellion, brought Roldan to a realizing sense of the risk he was running. Upon receiving the safe-conducts brought by Ballester and Carvajal, he set out

with some of his companions, sometime in November, for San Domingo and presented himself before the Admiral. There is no record of the circumstances of the interview, beyond the notice that it took place in the presence of many witnesses. Roldan formulated his demands, the Admiral stated what he could and what he could not concede, and Roldan returned to Bonao to lay the result before his companions, accompanied by the Admiral's majordomo, Diego de Salamanca. The latter returned in a few days with the rebels' ultimatum, couched in such arrogant terms that its acceptance was impossible. Carvajal was again called in as negotiator and sent to Bonao with a new schedule of conditions, which the Admiral declared he would sign if Roldan would abide by them. Carvajal found the rebels actually besieging the worthy Ballester in Fort Conception and on the point of compelling its surrender. At his approach they suspended operations and withdrew to discuss his propositions. The outcome of it all was, that Roldan agreed to the Admiral's main condition, which was that they should leave Hispaniola and return to Spain, but added certain demands; that two vessels, fully equipped and supplied, should be sent around to Xaragua for their voyage; that each man should be allowed to carry with him the women of his harem and one male slave; and that to Roldan and each of his fellows should be given a certificate of good service, full arrears of back-pay, and all the property they claimed to be theirs. When this was brought to the Admiral, for the sake of seeing himself free of this incubus, and devoting himself to the improvement of the colony, he accepted it subject to a proviso: that the embarkation should take place within fifty days; that Roldan should permit no more Spaniards to join his band; that no kidnapped Indian should be taken to Spain against his will; and that all the property belonging to the Crown should be delivered over to the Admiral's representative on the arrival of the two caravels at Xaragua. For some reason of his own it suited Roldan to accept the revised agreement, and he signed it on the 17th of November; sending back to the Admiral the insolent message, that if the latter did not sign it so that Roldan had



it back within ten days, he would add as many men to his band as sought him. In less than the time mentioned the agreement was in Roldan's hands, duly signed and sealed, and the rebels took up their march for Xaragua, saying they were going to prepare for their voyage.

Such was the Admiral's haste to get rid of these turbulent outlaws, that he took two of the vessels destined for Don Bartholomew's exploration of Paria and ordered them to be made ready for the passage to Spain. They were not completed until early in January, 1499; but the moment they could sail with safety the Admiral despatched them for Xaragua, sending Carvajal to arrange for the prompt departure of the rebels. To provide for a possible contingency, Carvajal carried a special proclamation in which the Admiral agreed that such of Roldan's men as preferred to remain in Hispaniola would be allowed the same holdings of land and emoluments as other colonists. But ill fortune pursued every step of this wearisome affair. One of the caravels was so damaged in a storm encountered soon after leaving San Domingo that she had to be beached in the nearest harbor, where she and her consort were delayed until the end of March. When they finally reached Xaragua, Roldan coolly declared that as they were not ready for him within the fifty stipulated days the whole agreement was annulled, as it was obvious that the Admiral had intentionally held them back with the purpose of finding an excuse for revenging himself on the rebels. In despair Carvajal called upon Francisco de Garay, who had accompanied him as notary, to make a formal *acta* of his demand upon Roldan for a compliance with the agreement, and his refusal, and this he sent back to the Admiral with a report of all that had occurred.

Columbus had left San Domingo, as soon as the caravels had sailed out of the port, and gone to Isabella, intending to make a visit to all the Spanish settlements and to confer with the native caciques on his way, hoping to reëstablish order among the colonists and confidence among the Indians. He had met with such measure of success as to satisfy him that, in the absence of any fresh disturbing incidents, the island would speedily become what he so ardently

desired, — a source of permanent and progressive revenue. The news of Roldan's last outbreak shattered these flattering expectations, and the Admiral hastened back to San Domingo. From there he addressed a letter to Roldan and his chief lieutenant, Adrian de Moxica, couched in amicable terms, pointing out the danger of their course, its utter futility, and the benefits which would accrue to them by abandoning it. To this, in due course, Roldan replied ironically, thanking the Admiral for his good counsel, but averring that he had no use for it. Carvajal, however, succeeded in persuading him to so far moderate his arrogance as to return to the first understanding, — to remit the whole matter to the Crown for settlement, each side sending commissioners to Spain to argue its case. Carvajal promised that a single caravel should be furnished for this purpose, but Roldan refused to accept anything but the Admiral's official pledge ; whereupon Carvajal set out for San Domingo, followed by Roldan, who sought a private interview with him on the way and insisted that he desired to meet the Admiral and arrange the whole matter, but was prevented by his colleagues. The two vessels were ordered back from Xaragua to San Domingo by Carvajal.

Six months had been worse than squandered in these frivolous disputes. It is entirely probable that Roldan was constrained by his associates to continue a quarrel of which he was personally heartily weary. They dared not trust him, though he was willing to trust the Admiral. The latter was bent on shedding no Castilian blood except in the very last extremity. He knew it would never be forgiven him by Ferdinand or Isabella, whatever the justification. It was nothing new for him to be patient, but never was his patience more grievously tried. When Carvajal returned, the Admiral approved his latest offer, wrote out a new safe-conduct for Roldan and his associates, and even accepted the indignity of permitting Carvajal, Coronel, and other of his captains to endorse it with their personal guarantee, as the rebels demanded. A meeting was arranged for on board a caravel anchored in the Bay of Azua, some 80 or 100 miles west of San Domingo. Thither the Admiral repaired, accompanied

by many of his staunchest friends, and, on August 22nd, Roldan and his fellow-conspirators came on board for the conference. It is not necessary to rehearse the charges and counter-charges, the proposals and amendments which were debated. The upshot was, that it was agreed that the two caravels should sail for Spain with not more than fifteen of the rebels ; that all should be done for the band that the former arrangement provided ; that those who remained should be allotted lands and laborers ; and that the Admiral should publicly restore Roldan as Chief Justice, and proclaim that he was a faithful officer who had been misled by designing persons. When Roldan went ashore and reported this adjustment to his followers, they flatly refused to sanction it. After a couple of days' deliberation they sent on board their conditions, which included all that the Admiral had agreed to and certain other extravagant concessions, of which the last was the worst : that the Admiral must consent that, in the event of his failing to carry out the terms of the agreement to their entire satisfaction, they were to have the legal right to band together and *compel him by force*, by any means in their power and discretion, to fulfil the bargain as they interpreted it !

The Admiral accepted the whole shameful demand, stipulating only that if the rebels ever again failed in their allegiance his compact with them was to be void, and they were to be liable for all their past offences as well as any more recent ones. Las Casas infers that at some stage of the long contest, — which had been dragged on now for a year, — a vessel had arrived from Spain bringing replies to the letters sent by the five vessels which sailed in October, '98, and that among these was a communication from Fonseca urging the Admiral to take no extreme measures until the King and Queen could determine what was best to be done. The Admiral himself, in the report he made to the sovereigns, does not refer to this. He recites instead the vast harm already done to the interests of the Crown in the Indies by the prevalent anarchy ; the general demoralization of the colonists ; the formation of at least two other bands of freebooters who purposed imitating in the eastern districts of

the island the excesses committed by Roldan in the west ; the indefinite cessation of all revenue ; and the utter destruction of all prospects of a further extension of the Crown's authority in other islands, and on the lately found Terra Firma. These were the motives which led him, forced as he was to forego the infliction of a righteous and sufficient punishment, to prefer his own humiliation to a continuance of a situation so disastrous to the interests committed to him.

"Thus," he wrote, "in order to avoid this evil, hoping that their Majesties would provide a remedy for all that was done and that whoever should read that agreement would clearly see that neither its spirit nor its contents were reasonable, but that it is against all the dictates of justice and utterly beyond that quality, and that it was signed and promulgated under compulsion, I had to execute both it and the other one making the appointment of Chief Justice. Concerning the latter, after the first settlement was agreed to and signed, Roldan and all his people broke out afresh because he was not willing that any one superior to him should be recognized in the contract ; all of them shouting loudly that they would hang all my followers who were on shore if they did not go on board at once ; wherefore I was obliged to sign the other undertaking as they required, for the time and reasons already given."

Apart from the indignity placed upon and borne by him, the Admiral had reason to be content with the result of his abnegation, viewing it, as he did, as a merely temporary sacrifice. Roldan and his party came into San Domingo and busied themselves with vaunting their exploits and swaggering to their hearts' content. The colonists in general were inclined to look upon them as heroes and the Admiral's authority suffered in consequence ; but Roldan himself saw that his interest lay in gaining as far as he might the Admiral's forgiveness, and seems to have exerted his influence in the direction of peace and harmony. The adjustment of all disputes, and the various concessions granted the ex-rebels, were publicly proclaimed on September 28th, and the two caravels were duly despatched to Spain with the respective versions of the negotiations and settlement.

This done, the Admiral was about to turn again to the restoration of order in the concerns of his long distracted government, preparatory to returning himself to Spain to confer with their Majesties, when he was confronted with an emergency in the last direction from which one could have been expected. Word was brought to San Domingo that Alonzo de Hojeda, with three caravels, was at anchor in the port of Yaquimo, 300 miles west of the city, busily occupied in cutting and loading a cargo of brazil-wood.





## XVIII.

### THE FAITH OF PRINCES.

THE five vessels despatched from San Domingo on October 18th, 1498, arrived at Seville about Christmas. The voyage had been a difficult and disastrous one, and many of the Indian slaves had died on the passage and been thrown to the sharks. Those who survived seem to have been sold in regular course, and their product covered into the royal treasury. Neither Ferdinand nor Isabella thought it necessary to interfere in their fate, arguing, no doubt, that if the victims did but know, they were better off in Christian bondage than in heathen liberty. But there was one matter which riveted their attention, even to the exclusion of any adequate consideration of the Admiral's new discoveries, and that was the rebellion of Roldan. Little as they appear to have heeded the Admiral's speculations concerning Paradise, the King and Queen paid jealous heed to his report of the insurrection, as they doubtless did to the excuses offered by the rebels. Whether they really acknowledged the force of the complaint made by Columbus, — that his hands were tied as to an efficient administration of justice, — or whether they merely used his appeal for a coadjutor as a cloak, is left in doubt by succeeding events. The evidence is in favor of their sincerity, at least at the outset. Whatever their motive, they acted with unusual promptness, for on the 21st of March, 1499, they issued a commission to Francisco de Bobadilla directing him to proceed at once to Hispaniola, investigate the outbreak, and chastise the guilty. Both the choice of their delegate and the tenor of his original instructions indicate a



disposition to render aid to the Admiral. Bobadilla was a Court official of some distinction, with nothing in his past record to justify doubt as to the wisdom of his appointment. The commission itself was couched in terms significant of an emphatic determination to uphold Columbus in his authority.

"Know ye," the document ran, "that Don Christopher Columbus, our Admiral of the Ocean Sea and of the islands and continent in the Indies, has sent to us a report saying that while he was absent from the said islands and at our Court certain persons in them, including a Justice, rose in rebellion in the said islands against the said Admiral and the other Justices he had appointed there in our name; and that although such persons and the said Justice were warned not to enter into the said rebellion and uproar, they were not willing to abandon it, but rather persisted and still continue in the said rebellion, roaming through that island, committing robberies and doing other iniquities, damages, and violences in contempt of their duty to God and to ourselves. . . . Wherefore we command you that you set out immediately for the said islands and continent in the Indies and hold your inquiry, seeking to learn by whatever methods and in whatever quarters may seem best the truth of all the above, informing yourself who and what persons they were who rebelled against the said Admiral, and for what cause or pretext, and what robberies, outrages, or damages they have perpetrated, and all else which may seem to you necessary to fully acquaint you with the matter. Having obtained this information and being possessed of the truth, you shall seize the persons and sequester the property of those whom you may find guilty, and shall proceed against those you have secured, as well as against such as are at large, with the extreme penalties, both civil and criminal, which you find permissible by law."

Had Bobadilla been sent out promptly with these powers, and discharged his office with common discretion, the revolt in the island would have been stamped out, and the colony spared many years of confusion and strife. Before he was ready to leave Spain, a radical change took place in the attitude of Ferdinand and Isabella towards Columbus, the consequences of which overwhelmed the latter with ruin and degradation.

Las Casas attributes this withdrawal of the royal favor primarily to the enmity of Fonseca for the Admiral "which,"

he remarks, "was almost notorious, and the evidences of which I saw with my eyes, heard with my ears, and understood with my mind." Certainly the record supports the assertion. As soon as the Admiral's report and map reached his hands, Fonseca laid them before Hojeda, who had left Hispaniola for Spain some time before and bore a grudge against the Admiral, the cause of which is not known. What were the especial ties between these two men is also matter for conjecture, but there is no question as to their common hostility to Columbus. With the latter's charts and letters before him, illustrated by his own experiences among the islands, Hojeda saw the opportunity of his life. In flagrant disregard of the exclusive and repeatedly confirmed concessions made to the Admiral, Fonseca issued a license to Hojeda to make a voyage of discovery and trade to the Indies, excepting from its provisions only the countries claimed by Portugal in the remote East and the lands discovered by Columbus *prior to 1495*. The employment of this date shows conclusively that the deliberate purpose of the license was to allow Hojeda to reap the advantages of the Admiral's discoveries of Paria and the pearl region. Hojeda had no difficulty in obtaining four caravels and the necessary companions, among whom were Juan de la Cosa, the former pilot of Columbus, and Americus Vespucci. He made his preparations with such activity that he was able to sail from Cadiz on the 20th of May, steering the course laid down in the Admiral's charts. Striking the coast of South America, 300 miles below the mouth of the Orinoco, he followed it to the north and west, passed through the Mouths of the Serpent and Dragon, touched at Margarita and continued along Terra Firma as far as the Gulf of Maracaibo. Thence he bore away for Hispaniola, where he arrived, as Columbus was informed, on the 5th of September. As though to emphasize his determination to trample on all the solemn engagements made by the Crown with the Admiral, Fonseca issued several other licenses for voyages similar to that undertaken by Hojeda. We have the record of at least five of these. A wealthy merchant of Seville, Guerra by name, secured one of the permits and sent out a

vessel commanded by his brother and navigated by Pedro Alonzo Niño, that other pilot of the Admiral's who had accompanied him at the time of the discovery of Paria and had returned with the five ships. Armed with copies of his charts these worthies set sail in June; pursued the course laid down but bearing more to the south; struck the new continent still nearer the Equator than Hojeda; continued on past Paria and Margarita, and finally reached a point on the coast of the modern Venezuela at or near La Guayra. Thence they returned to Spain "loaded with pearls as though they had been straw," according to Peter Martyr. In December, yet another of the Admiral's former companions, and one of the most notable, Vincente Yañez Pinzon, taking with him three of the skilled mariners who had sailed with Columbus when he discovered Paria, set out on a similar voyage. Following closely the Admiral's track, but adopting his hint as to crossing the Equator well to the east, Pinzon made the coast of the modern Brazil in the neighborhood of Cape St. Augustine, pursued his way northward, discovering the Amazon River in passing, touched at Paria, kept on to the west along Terra Firma for several hundred miles, and, finally, returned to Spain by way of Hispaniola. It does not consist with the scope of our narrative to carry this record further. Diego de Lepe, with the Admiral's ex-pilot, Bartholomew Roldan, and Rodrigo de Bastidas, with Juan de la Cosa again, undertook, the following year, to emulate the exploits of their predecessors, and, following the now well-worn path, pushed on past the farthest cape theretofore reached, and attained the vicinity of Darien before putting about for Spain.

All these expeditions, without exception, were based on the Admiral's charts interpreted by pilots or seamen who had sailed with him. All of them paid him that homage of flattery which is alleged to lie in a servile imitation. All of them were legitimate, in so far that they were authorized by Ferdinand and Isabella, or by their agent Fonseca; and all of them were directed solely and purely to commercial ends. Gold, pearls, brazil-wood, and slaves, slaves, slaves; these were the openly avowed objects of each of the voyages

recited, including that in which Americus Vespucci so easily gained, with some, a reputation for intrepid enterprise and philosophical absorption in the mysteries of Nature. The King and Queen found no difficulty in accepting their share of each class of the proceeds brought from the coasts their Admiral had found. Although the slaves were, in these cases, the product of rank kidnapping, they were sold for the benefit of whom it might concern without let or hindrance. When their Catholic Majesties had cause to suppose that anything was withheld from entry, they proceeded against the returned adventurer with a viciousness worthy of Shylock. By some occult process of reasoning, they satisfied their consciences that there was a difference between the natives of Paria and those of Hispaniola, and that the former might be legitimately abducted by Hojeda, Pinzon, and Vespucci, while a great to-do must be made about the latter. Having broken faith with Columbus like Turks, Ferdinand and Isabella pocketed their share of the plunder which resulted with as little scruple as Buccaneers.

Such were the immediate consequences of the Admiral's announcement of his finding of the "great land" under the Equator, and such the recompense prepared for him during the weary months in which he was submitting to one indignity after another, each more galling than that preceding it, in his devotion to what he believed to be the wishes of his sovereigns. Far more ingenious pens than ours have exerted their skill in endeavoring to explain away the apparent faithlessness of Ferdinand and Isabella, or, at least, to exculpate the Queen. That they have failed is due to no want of earnestness, but to the inherent hopelessness of the effort. No possible sophistry can be found to cloak the naked injustice, and where neither King nor Queen attempted a defence it is superfluous for us to concoct one. Greed and jealousy were the genuine motives, ugly though the terms look when applied to characters otherwise great. The grants made to Columbus, and so solemnly ratified to his descendants, were perpetual, and subject to no conditions save the finding of land beyond the mysterious Ocean Sea. His reports of his latest discoveries, supported by the arguments

he employed to establish their far-reaching importance, opened the eyes of the most skeptical as to the probable range of his achievements. In his entanglement with his colonists, and the hue and cry raised against him, the sovereigns found the opportunity for ignoring his rights without any great danger of having to face a reckoning, and they acted as their interests dictated. They were neither better nor worse than the spirit of their times, and were they not the inheritors of Divine Right? It was not the first time, or the last, that in a partnership with the Crown the subject was left with its autograph and seals as his share of the profits. The privilege of petition and expostulation was always his — and much good might it do him.

The nullification of their engagements with Columbus concerning the navigation and commerce of the western seas was not the only blow aimed at him by Ferdinand and Isabella in the spring of 1499. Two months after their appointment of Bobadilla as special commissioner to assist the Admiral in the restoration of order, they issued, on the 21st of May, two new decrees which deprived the latter of every vestige of authority and prerogative. The first, addressed to all the officers and subjects of the Crown in the Indies, directed them to receive Bobadilla as Governor and Supreme Judge of the Islands and Terra Firma, and conferred upon him the exclusive government of those regions. The second, addressed to the Admiral, his brothers, and his lieutenants in charge of the forts, vessels, and other royal property, ordered them to deliver the same over to Bobadilla as Governor, dispensed with the formalities usually attendant upon a change of administration, and established the penalty for treason in the event of any hesitation or delay being shown. The only explanation vouchsafed by the sovereigns to the man who held their beautifully engrossed parchments, constituting him and his heirs Perpetual Governors of the Indies and Admirals of the Ocean Sea, was embraced in these lines : —

“The King and Queen to Don Christopher Columbus, Our Admiral of the Ocean Sea: We have commanded Don Francisco de Bobadilla, the bearer of this, to say to you on our

behalf certain things which he will communicate. We ask you to give him faith and credence and to put the same into execution. At Madrid, the 26th of May, 1499. I, the King. I, the Queen."

The powers conferred upon Bobadilla were specifically "for as long as it shall be our wish and pleasure," and this may be interpreted as intimating that they were only provisional. At the same time, the tenor and summary nature of his installation point to some sudden and deeply rooted distrust of Columbus. In default of any sufficient elucidation by the records of the period, various causes have been suggested for this abrupt accession of royal displeasure. By some historians it is attributed to the charges made (or supposed to have been made) by Roldan's partisans, that Columbus was plotting the betrayal of the Indies to a rival power. Others have held that the charge was that he and his brothers were conspiring to seize the government of the New World for their own advantage. Yet others, following the lead of Las Casas, ascribe the Admiral's downfall to the irresistible vehemence of Ferdinand and Isabella's righteous indignation when they read the propositions made by Columbus for the shipment of slaves to Europe. None of these hypotheses are supported by a jot of evidence, and the last one is disproved by the conduct of the King and Queen before, at, and long after the time of Bobadilla's nomination as governor.<sup>1</sup> What took place between March and May, to convert their intention of aiding Columbus into a purpose to supplant him, must remain matter for conjecture until

<sup>1</sup> Take, for example, this extract from the contract between Bastidas and the Crown, signed June 5, 1500: "Also, that of all the gold, silver, copper, lead, tin, quicksilver, or other metal, and all the mother-of-pearl, pearls, precious stones and jewels, *and all the slaves,—both black and bright-skinned,*—who in our kingdoms are held and reputed to be slaves, and all the monsters, serpents, and other wild beasts, and all the fish, birds, spices, drugs, and everything else, whatever be its name, nature, or value, *we shall have the one-fourth part of all that remains* after deducting the cost of equipping, chartering, and maintaining the squadron and the other expenses of the voyage." And yet Columbus is the "slave driver," and Ferdinand and Isabella are applauded for their repugnance to his proposals.



additional light is obtained ; but we are disposed to find the explanation in the persistent assaults made upon Columbus by Roldan's sympathizers at Court, abetted by Fonseca's influence and that of the old Boil-Margarite cabal, and coinciding with the sovereigns' determination to repudiate their compact with the Admiral as soon as they ascertained the enormous import of his latest discovery. Having originally commissioned Bobadilla in response to the Admiral's own appeal for a judicial colleague, they found in the charges made against him a pretext for depriving him of all authority when they decided to violate his other privileges. As viceroy and governor of the new-found lands he might possibly be capable of some resistance ; as a cashiered officer of the Crown he was harmless. Whatever explanation we may adopt, we must not lose sight of one fact ; both the license granted to Hojeda and his successors, and the appointment of Bobadilla to displace Columbus, were acts of arrogant bad faith. By each a solemnly ratified covenant was broken, after the stipulated consideration had been far more than fulfilled by Columbus. These two acts were coincident in time and in scope, and where the perfidy was so cynically overt it seems to be a waste of time to look for concealed motives which may be forced into consistency with justice. Ferdinand and Isabella concluded they could now dispense with Columbus, and they made no scruple about violating their pledges to do so.

There is no notice of any vessel arriving in Spain from San Domingo between the five which reached Cadiz at Christmas, 1498, and the two which arrived also about Christmas, in 1499, bearing the representatives sent by the Admiral and the rebels to plead their respective causes before the throne. The delay in Bobadilla's departure for his new government does not seem, therefore, to be due to any doubt as to the propriety of their action on the part of the King and Queen. The conjecture advanced by Las Casas, that the sovereigns were preoccupied with the threatening condition of affairs among the recently conquered Moors of Granada, will scarcely account for the detention of Bobadilla, for the famous rising in the Alpuxarras did

not occur until the following year. It seems to us more probable that the Crown, having provided for the Admiral's removal, waited to hear the result of Roldan's insurrection before sending out Bobadilla. In other words, it was possible that Roldan might save the Crown the necessity of deposing Columbus. The theory that Ferdinand and Isabella suspended all active proceedings in the matter, hoping to receive satisfactory explanations from the Admiral, is disproved by the fact that their final action in the premises was taken after they had such a justification in their hands. The real solution in the enigma probably lies in the exaggerated importance we attach to the part which the affairs of Hispaniola played in Spanish politics at that juncture. Ferdinand was deeply absorbed in the intricate tangle of European statecraft, and his consort was no less busily occupied with the establishment of the Inquisition. The larger interests of the Crown in the Indies were provided for by the virtual cancellation of the Admiral's privileges: the less important affairs of the colony in Hispaniola could be safely left for the time being. Of revenue there was little prospect for the moment, whether Viceroy or outlaw were victorious, and, apart from this, the disturbances among a few hundred subjects in a remote island did not call for instant attention to the exclusion of more important questions lying nearer home. Whatever the reason, from the date of his commission in May to the arrival of the two ships in December, Bobadilla remained quietly in Spain, Governor of the Indies in name alone.

Once these vessels were in port, there could be no pretence that the situation in Hispaniola was not fully comprehended at Court. The Admiral was represented by Ballester, Barrantes, and Carvajal, — than whom no one was more familiar with all that had passed, — while Roldan had his appointed emissaries besides the detachment of his followers who were returned to Spain under the terms of the capitulation. The case alleged by the latter against the Admiral was, naturally, the most vehemently expressed and generally accepted. He and his brothers, they charged, were guilty of countless cruel and tyrannical acts against their Castil-

ian colonists; for any light offence they would hang the Spaniards, behead them, flog them, cut off their hands, shedding Spanish blood as though they were mortal enemies to Castile. Moreover they were traitors to the King and Queen, who contemplated seizing the government of the Indies and erecting there an empire of their own, for which purpose they had forbidden the extraction of any gold except under their own licenses, so that they might accumulate all the treasure for their own nefarious ends. If anything, the accusations brought against Don Bartholomew and Don Diego were more intemperate than those against the Admiral; the first named, especially, being described as a monster in human shape whose one delight was to persecute and torment the loyal subjects of Castile. To these personal accusations were added pessimistic accounts of the climate and natural resources of the islands, and heart-breaking recitals of the sufferings endured by the colonists through the cold-blooded avarice and studied maladministration of Columbus and his brothers. The new arrivals joined those who had returned home on the five ships of the year before in clamoring for the pay they had never earned, whenever they could get within earshot of King or Queen, and in reviling noisily the name of Columbus when his sons passed by. Like any other foul-mouthed and ill-conditioned rabble in seasons of discontent, they hung around Palace and Government buildings, alternately pleading and cursing in their efforts to be heard. How much of all this was theatrical display we cannot know; that it was fostered, if not incited, by the Admiral's enemies there is no doubt. That Ferdinand's otherwise not unduly tender sensibilities should have been profoundly affected by the exhibition of his faithful vassals' distress, and his quick sense of justice impressed by their obvious sufferings in his cause, is a very pretty story which lacks only the element of truth to make it interesting. As a matter of fact, his sensibilities were as adjustable to the circumstance of the moment as was his justice, and if he allowed the opinion to get abroad that he was moved, it was because it suited his purpose. The cause of Columbus was prejudged, and

the needy adventurers who posed as his "victims" might have spared themselves the labor of vituperation for all the effect it had upon Ferdinand's decision.

The Admiral, on his side, submitted his report of the rebellion and its causes, substantiating his assertions by the oral statements of the loyal and reputable officers whom he sent to represent him. He begged their Majesties to examine carefully the records of the official investigations which he forwarded, and to inquire themselves into their truth from the many witnesses who had gone to Spain. After describing the constraint under which he acted in signing the capitulation with Roldan, he sets forth nine reasons why he should be held by their Majesties to be absolved from its obligations, and entreats them to declare the agreement to be without effect on account of the circumstances by which it was extorted. Some of the reasons alleged are forcible and well taken; others are frivolous and savor strongly of chicane. Taken together and read with reference to the time of their production, they illustrate graphically the mental attitude of Columbus towards the difficult questions which surrounded him. The capitulation should be annulled, he claims, (1st) because he was compelled by force to sign what the rebels dictated, not what he deemed proper; (2nd) because he signed as Viceroy, whereas, being on a caravel and at sea, he only had jurisdiction as Admiral; (3rd) because, under the trial held by Don Bartholomew, Roldan and his followers were convicted traitors, and neither as Admiral nor Viceroy could Columbus relieve a sentence of treason; (4th) because the capitulation related, *inter alia*, to interest of the Royal Treasury, and in the absence of the proper Crown officials no engagement affecting it was binding; (5th) because passage to Spain was granted to all, and those of the rebels who were serving out in Hispaniola sentences for crimes committed in Spain should have been excepted; (6th) because payment was promised to all for the whole period of their residence, including the time they were in insurrection; whereas the same contract obliged them to make good all losses and damages caused by the rebellion, and this the Admiral had

no right to remit; (7th) because they were equally liable for the losses occasioned to the Crown through the desertion of the forty men seduced from the ships of Araña and his colleagues; (8th) because Roldan failed to furnish the list of those who had inaugurated the rebellion with him and the reasons they alleged, as he was bound to do, in order to secure their pardon; (9th) because although Roldan and all the other rebels who had come out in the armada of '93 had sworn by crucifix and Mass before the Admiral and the Bishop of Badajoz (Fonseca) to be true and loyal vassals of the King and Queen, and to guard their royal estate and dignity, all of which oaths were recorded in the books of the Comptroller, they had rebelled against the authority of the Crown and committed enormous depredations upon its property.

The first and the last reasons were good and sufficient for the King and Queen to disavow the act of their Viceroy and order the rebels to be chastised as they merited. The other seven are cast too much in the mould of the fifteenth century to be openly admitted as valid by the nineteenth,—although our Equity calendars would not be so long if we lived up to our professions in this respect. But whether forcible or feeble, Columbus might have spared his arguments. It was already written that nothing he could say or do would turn his sovereigns from their elected course.

As if foreseeing the futility of his appeals, he took advantage of the occasion to lay before the King and Queen a memorial, in which he recounted the history of his enterprise from the time he first laid it before them down to the hour of his writing. It is needless to transcribe the greater part of it, for its contents are a repetition of what he had written elsewhere; but he is entitled to be heard in his own defence when he answers the allegations of Roldan's partisans. It has so recently been charged, in the interests of Historical Criticism, that he studiously concealed from his sovereigns all the difficulties he had encountered, with the one exception of his failure to secure a revenue, that our readers may be willing to know what he really did say.

They never will learn it from some whose words will carry far more weight than our own.

After reviewing the events following the foundation of Isabella, the revolt of Boil and Margarite, and the more recent rebellion of Roldan, he refers to the benefits he had showered upon that "obscure ingrate," and the wealth which both Roldan and his partisans had accumulated. The loyal and industrious among the colonists, he affirms, now that they were acclimated, were beginning to reap the rewards of their labors through the abounding fertility of the soil. The idle and dissolute,—

"when they saw that their expectations would not be realized, as they had imagined, were ever afterwards possessed of the desire to return to Spain. I so arranged that some should go with every squadron and, to my sorrow, although they had received from me all consideration and proper treatment, as soon as they arrived there they said worse things of me than of a Moor, without giving any facts but raising against me a thousand false witnesses, and this has continued until the present day. . . .

"They have alleged over there," he continues, "that I have located the settlement at the worst site on the island, whereas it is the very best and so proclaimed by all the Indians of Hispaniola. Many of those who make the charge have never gone a gun-shot beyond the palisades of the town, and I know not what trust can be placed in them. They said they used to die of thirst, when a river flows by the town not so far as from Santa Martha in Seville to the river there. They said that the place is the most unhealthy of all, when it is the healthiest; although the whole country is the most wholesome under heaven and possesses the best water and climate,—as it should,—lying in the same latitude as the Canaries, . . . which have always been extolled by philosophers for the mildness of their climate. . . . They said there were no provisions, and there is such a plenty of meat, bread, and fish that on arriving here the very peasants who have been brought out as laborers prefer not to take the Crown wages but to support themselves and the Indians who work for them. This is proved also by this Roldan himself who, more than a year ago, started off into the interior with 120 men, who took with them over 500 Indians to serve them, all of whom have been sustained with great abundance. They said that I appropriated the live-stock of people who had



brought it here, and I took nothing but 8 pigs from among a great many. This I did because they belonged to men who were returning to Spain and intended killing them all, which I prevented in order that they might increase, but I did not deny that they belonged to their owners. Now any one may see that the pigs are beyond counting in the island, and all of them came from the same breed, which I brought out in the ships and cared for at my own expense, — except the first cost which was 70 maravedies apiece at the Island of Gomera. They say that the country around Isabella, where the town is built, was very sterile and would not yield wheat, whereas I have harvested it and eaten the bread therefrom, . . . although nobody cares any longer for wheat-bread, because the native bread is very plentiful, much better for this climate and is made with less trouble.

“Of all this they accused me, in defiance of truth, as I have said, and all in order that your Majesties should detest both me and my enterprise. It would not have been so had its author and discoverer been a proselyte, for proselytes are enemies to the prosperity of your Majesties and of all Christians;<sup>1</sup> but they spread abroad these reports and endeavored so to manage that the whole affair should be a failure; and I am told that most of those who are with Roldan, who is now in arms against me, are such proselytes. They blame me because of my administration of justice, which I always meted out with so much fear of God and of your Majesties, — far more than had the culprits in their brutal and loathsome crimes, for which our Lord has imposed such burdensome punishments upon the world and of which the Justices here possess the records. Countless other falsehoods they have repeated concerning me and this country, which, nevertheless, it is evident Our Lord bestowed miraculously upon us and which is the most fertile and beautiful beneath the sun, having gold and copper, all kinds of spices and great quantities of brazil-wood, and from which, in slaves alone, the traders tell me more than 40 millions of maravedies may be secured each year. They give good reasons for this, as the shipments to Europe amount to three times as much every year. In this country the people who come here can live in all peace, as shall soon be apparent, and I believe that, in view of the necessity

<sup>1</sup> In allusion to Bribiesca, Fonseca's lieutenant, who was a converted Moor, or Jew. Columbus apparently wishes to imply that had the New World been found by Bribiesca, there would have been no occasion for all this trouble, for the simple reason that the Indies would never have belonged to Spain.

prevalent in Spain and the great plenty of Hispaniola, a great population will soon come here and that its seat will be at Isabella, where was the beginning of the colony, for it is the most appropriate and best place in the whole region. This we ought readily to believe, as Our Lord led me there by a miracle; for such it was, since I could go neither forward nor back with the ships, but only land there and unlade them. This has been the cause of my writing this letter, for although some shall say that it was unnecessary to relate matters which are past and shall consider prolix what is in fact so brief, I have thought it was all necessary both for your Majesties and for other persons who heard the evil reports which have been spread abroad with such malice and untruth concerning each of the things I have written herein. And these were said not only by those who went from here, but even more cruelly by certain individuals who never left Spain at all, but who had the means of reaching your Majesties' ear with their malicious and artful tales, all to do harm to me whom they envied, as being but a poor foreigner. Through all this, nevertheless, I have been sustained by Him who is Eternal, who has ever shown mercy to me, great sinner though I be."

Before closing his letter he makes a final appeal for a judicial coadjutor. The colonists knew that he did not dare to raise his hand against them to punish them, he writes, and that the charges which had been brought against him in Spain were believed there. His hands were therefore tied; but he would himself pay the salaries of a judge and two counsellors if their Majesties would appoint them. Only, he adds, let due heed be given to his prerogatives in making the appointments. "I may be in error," he says, "but my judgment is that princes should show much countenance to their governors as long as they maintain them in office, because when they fall into disrepute all is lost." In this, at least, Ferdinand and Isabella coincided with him. They proposed to remove the governor they were no longer disposed to support.

Whether the King and Queen ever read these last letters of Columbus, or heard the declarations of his representatives, is problematical. The situation of their kingdoms was somewhat critical, and Fonseca seems to have had undisputed control of the affairs of the Indies from the time

Columbus sailed from San Lucar in '98, and to have managed them according to his own views. No hint can be found that anything the Admiral wrote or his commissioners said influenced their Majesties by so much as a hair's-breadth. Had he not existed, he could have been no more completely ignored than he was during the last half of 1499 and the early months of 1500. Contract after contract was signed with privateers bound for the Indies, in open disregard of his rights. Lawsuits were instituted to collect the Crown's share of a commerce originated in flagrant violation of his exclusive privileges. One after another the solemn guarantees of 1493 and 1497 were vacated and cancelled. Navarrete publishes a Memorial existing among the Archives of the Indies and written in 1500 "amending" the concessions which were granted to Columbus as inviolable. Some of these elaborately besworn instruments were unceremoniously *rasgados*, *i.e.* torn up; others "altered." Suggestively enough the first entry is the "tearing up" of the concession to the Admiral of exclusive navigation in the Ocean Sea, while the last greatly reduces the share granted to him in the profits derived from the lands he should discover. Not less suggestive is the fact that these sweeping confiscations of his vested rights were the arbitrary acts of royal *prepotencia*; the seizure by the heavy hand of irresponsible Might of the property of an unresisting and uninformed absentee. If any consideration could augment the atrocious iniquity of the whole transaction, it is that the man who was thus boldly robbed by Ferdinand and Isabella was their partner and legal ward. Elizabeth's treatment of Raleigh was scrupulously honorable by comparison.

During all this period, from the settlement with Roldan in September, '99, to the spring of the succeeding year, Columbus was energetically striving to bring order out of chaos. Dismissing, regretfully, his plans for the immediate exploration of the southern continent, he kept Don Bartholomew at his side to aid in the work of reorganizing the colony. Roldan claimed for himself and his partisans the allotment of the fertile lands of Xaragua and the services of King Behechio's subjects. The Admiral, unwilling

to concentrate the malcontents in a region so remote from his authority, gave them instead allotments in various districts within easier reach of San Domingo and the fortresses. To each settler, or group of two or three, he granted the services of a cacique and so many Indians, and in many instances the grants amounted to little less than the installation of one or more of Roldan's ruffians as the proprietor of a native village and its plantations of yams and mandioca. It has been justly said that this was the beginning of that system of organized bondage which, under the names of *repartimiento* and *mita*, brought such incalculable misery upon the native population of Spanish America. But it must not be forgotten that the exaction of compulsory service from the inhabitants of a newly discovered or conquered country, was an essential element in all the programmes of territorial extension in that age. There was no cruelty intended or anticipated in the mere establishment of the system. It was originally intended, in all cases, to take the place of tribute. That many of the foulest outrages known to history flowed from its application to the native races of the New World, was due to the reckless inhumanity of those who first settled it, not to the callousness or brutality of those who first incorporated the measure into their schemes of administration. Of all the late rebels, Roldan, as was natural, fared the best. Upon him were bestowed rich and populous lands in the neighborhood of Isabella, others in the famous Vega Real,<sup>1</sup> and others yet in the coveted Xaragua. To him were given some of the small herd of cattle imported by the Admiral for breeding purposes, and, in short, the ex-rebel had only to make a request to have it allowed. It was of vital importance for the peace of the island that the arch mischief-maker should be bound to keep it, even if the chain was of ponderous gold. Having yielded so much to gain his policy, the Admiral was not likely to haggle over mere details of material advantage. He was bent on attaching Roldan to him until final instructions should come from Spain, and he succeeded.

<sup>1</sup> Among his serfs, if so we may call them, was that cacique whose ears were cut off by Hojeda in '93, as related in Chapter VIII.

Making deduction for a certain air of swagger and bluster which the reinstated Chief Justice could not resist the pleasure of exhibiting, the Admiral had no more useful lieutenant for the next year than his late antagonist. If he sometimes exceeded his powers, and assumed somewhat arrogantly to make appointments which were the prerogative of his chief, the latter winked at them and smothered the choler natural to his proud spirit. He was biding his time, as he had so often done before, and the bread of humiliation had lost something of its bitterness by frequent use.

The news of Hojeda's arrival on the coast suggested more to the Admiral than a mere infraction of his rights as Viceroy of Hispaniola and the Indies. It was imperative that he should know the motive and plans of his late follower. To ascertain these he promptly sent a couple of caravels along the southern coast, towards the west, and chose Roldan to conduct the expedition. The latter found Hojeda's squadron at anchor in the port of Yaquimo,<sup>1</sup> its commander with a party of men being ashore cutting brazil-wood. As soon as he was notified by Roldan's presence, Hojeda repaired to the anchorage and held an interview. To him the visitor was Chief Justice of the island, and when he demanded by what authority the strangers were on that coast, Hojeda unhesitatingly replied that he would exhibit his license as soon as it could be brought from on board his ship. He also yielded readily to Roldan's demand that the four caravels should report without delay at San Domingo, and volunteered the statement that it had been his intention, in any case to go and place himself at the Admiral's orders, as in duty bound. If Roldan was possessed of even a modicum of humor, he must have been impressed with this declaration. As it was, he hastened

<sup>1</sup> This is usually referred to by Columbus in his letters as "the Port of Brazil," from the quantity of that dye-wood found in the adjacent forests. The use of this word as a geographical designation several years before the discovery, by Vincent Yañez, of the country afterwards called by the same name, is not devoid of interest for the student of historical geography.

on board Hojeda's vessels and set himself to learn all he could. What he heard from his old associates — for there were many with Hojeda who, like him, had come out with the Admiral in '93 and returned since to Spain — was that it was common report at the Court and in Seville, that the Admiral was to be deprived of his rank as Viceroy, and that the Indies were thrown open to general commerce. Juan de la Cosa showed Roldan the license granted Hojeda by Bishop Fonseca, and gave him an account of the whole voyage, which makes a disagreeably "deadly parallel" with Vespucci's later account of his own alleged earlier expedition. Possessed of this information Roldan wrote to the Admiral, by a native courier, that he had learned much more than he dared commit to paper, but would soon be with him to relate all. His own two caravels he ordered to load with brazil-wood and then return to San Domingo, and started himself for Xaragua, supposing that Hojeda would in due time sail up the coast to report to the Admiral as he had promised. Without following the fortunes of these two worthies in detail, we may say that Hojeda, instead, sailed around to Xaragua and openly proclaimed to the few Spanish settlers in that region, that, if they would join him, he would lead them against the Admiral and extort from him all and more than Roldan had ever proposed to obtain. This soon reaching the latter's ears, he joined together a body of forty or fifty of his companions and other settlers and set out to settle matters with Hojeda. For three or four months they negotiated, skirmished, murdered each other's followers, and marched and counter-marched, with alternating success, until Roldan by a simple stratagem got Hojeda within his power and exacted terms with which his prisoner was forced to comply. Under these he left Hispaniola with his four caravels, fairly well laden with brazil-wood and slaves, in February or March of 1500, and made his way back to Spain.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In his account of his alleged *second* voyage, Vespucci thus refers to the incidents above related: "We arrived at the Island of Antillia, which Christopher Columbus discovered a few years ago, where we remained two months and two days, repairing our rigging and equip-



Columbus was kept faithfully informed by Roldan of all these occurrences. Every week or two native runners were sent to the Admiral with reports, and brought back his orders. The distance between Xaragua and the centre of the island, where the Admiral and Don Bartholomew were engaged in making their tour of organization and pacification, was more than three hundred miles, but the Indians could cover the distance in four or five days, and thus communication was both prompt and reliable. When, therefore, Roldan notified him that Hojeda had definitely left the coast; but that a certain young cavalier, Guevara by name, who, being a cousin of his own ex-lieutenant, Moxica, had taken part in his recent rebellion, was now endeavoring to stir up fresh disorders in Xaragua, Columbus instantly ordered that he should be expelled from that province and assigned to a residence elsewhere. Guevara begged to be sent to Cahay, where Moxica was settled, and Roldan consented; but instead of going the young man remained in Xaragua, which was to him a fool's paradise by reason of a love affair he had on hand with the daughter of the famous and beautiful chieftainess Anacaona. Either because of his disobedience, or because of his loose fashion of declaiming against the Admiral and Roldan, or because the latter had designs of his own concerning the Indian beauty, or for all these motives combined, Roldan was much incensed, and formally warned Guevara that the consequences were likely to be serious if he continued to disregard the Admiral's orders. Several interviews ensued without other result than Roldan summoning his unruly partisan to obey his commands under pain of the law, to which Guevara responded with such insolent threats that he was ordered to leave Xaragua at once and present him-

ment, and suffering at times many injuries from the Christians who were settled there, which I refrain from recounting to avoid prolixity." The passage quoted is notable less from the ingenuity with which it perverts the truth than from the fact that it contains *the only allusion* in all Vespucci's writings of Columbus or his discoveries. In his anxiety to economize words, Hojeda's immortal supercargo confined his great rival's glory to the finding of the single island of Hayti.

self before the Admiral for the latter's sentence upon his misdemeanors. To gain time, Guevara begged to be permitted to wait until Roldan joined the Admiral, and this was yielded; whereupon he immediately began to incite the other Spaniards to murder Roldan on the ground of alleged tyranny. This was reported, as such plots are wont to be, to the intended victim, who quickly seized Guevara and seven associates, and communicated the whole affair to the Admiral, with a request for instructions. The reply was, that the prisoners should be sent under guard to San Domingo to be tried for their offences.

Thus far the incident, except for the insubordination of Guevara, had not transcended the limits of a personal quarrel. The character of the Spanish settlers in Xaragua, and their readiness to listen to Hojeda's treasonable proposals, justified the severity shown by Roldan as soon as he found Guevara instigating fresh disturbances; but otherwise it is fair to suppose that the Chief Justice was mainly influenced by a desire to satisfy his own grudge. The matter assumed a graver complexion when Adrian de Moxica, on hearing of the arrest and deportation of his cousin, swore roundly that he would take vengeance on Roldan, and scoured the Vega drumming up recruits to attempt a rescue. His popularity and reputation for daring were such that in a few days he had assembled a formidable band of chronic malcontents, both on foot and mounted, whose openly avowed purpose was to release Guevara, and assassinate both Roldan and the Admiral. This came to the latter's ears as he was quartered at Fort Conception, in the Vega. For once he silenced the whisperings of prudence and chose the solution natural to his energetic spirit. Either he was Viceroy and Governor General of this island for his King and Queen, or it was ruled by every desperado who chose to raise the standard of revolt and the old cry of oppression by his brothers and himself. Quite apart from the imminent peril in which he and his colleague stood by reason of Moxica's strength, was the consideration that if he winked at this last exhibition of lawless audacity, the very peasants in the fields would turn upon him in contempt of his sup-

posed weakness or pusillanimity. If he was ever to reassert his authority he must do it now and effectively. He had with him but a handful of dependents in whose loyalty he could trust, — half a dozen personal attendants, and three soldiers, — but with these he determined to make the attempt. Setting out at night from Conception with this little band, the Admiral marched hastily and stealthily to where Moxica was encamped. A sudden charge, a confused struggle in the darkness, and the rebels fled, leaving their leader and some of his adherents prisoners in the hands of their uncounted assailants. With equal expedition they were hurried back to the fort, interrogated, and sentence of death pronounced upon their chief. Protesting that he was unfit to die without absolution, one of the few priests in the colony, who was stationed at the fort, was assigned to hear the doomed man's confession and minister the rites of the Church. Instead of applying himself to the offices of religion, the culprit sought to occupy the priest's attention and gain time. Warned repeatedly of the futility of his artifice, he persisted in pursuing it until, seeing that his only motive was to prolong the scene in hope of a rescue, the Admiral gave orders to end a spectacle whose continuation could only result in greater demoralization. Struggling in the hands of his jailers and crying out that he had falsely accused many innocent people as being his accomplices, the wretched outlaw was swung off from the turret to which his halter had been made fast. Following up his advantage, the Admiral seized other ringleaders and dealt out a like summary punishment to them, while he despatched Don Bartholomew to follow the fugitives into Xaragua and bring them to San Domingo for trial. In the course of a few weeks the Adelantado had sent to that city sixteen prisoners, who were consigned to the dungeon of the Admiral's fortified house to await the action of the law. He also had hung several of Moxica's most truculent associates, as fast as he captured them in Xaragua.

Much has been said, by those who distort his every act, of the shocking cruelty displayed by Columbus in these proceedings. It is well to recall that Moxica and his fellow

conspirators had entered into a solemn covenant to keep the peace only a few months before, in virtue of which they had already been pardoned the crime of former rebellion; that they specifically agreed to bear the consequences of both their past and renewed misdeeds in the event of entering into any fresh conspiracy; and that in this case the Admiral had either to yield up his authority and his life, or to hold the recreants pitilessly to their voluntarily assumed pledge. That Columbus was driven, despite his deep-rooted scruples against shedding Castilian blood, to execute Moxica and his principal confederates, is the most convincing evidence possible as to the imperative necessity of his action.<sup>1</sup>

He was only too soon to have an opportunity to defend himself. While he was yet in the neighborhood of Concepcion, making his final arrangements for the administration of the now quiet province, and looking forward to a season of uninterrupted peace and the prosecution of his long-deferred plans concerning Paria, he received a message from Don Diego saying that Don Francisco de Bobadilla had arrived at San Domingo, deposed the Admiral, taken possession of the government, and proclaimed himself as Governor of the Indies.

<sup>1</sup> Las Casas says that he heard the facts, as he narrates them, from sundry of the participants when he reached San Domingo about a year and a half after they occurred, and that he read "a certain legal inquiry, in which many witnesses testified to what I have related." This is better evidence than the prejudiced suppositions of later centuries.





## XIX.

### THE TRIUMPH OF INTRIGUE.

ALTHOUGH he had the assertions of Hojeda to prepare him for some unfriendly demonstration on the part of the King and Queen, Columbus could not bring himself at first to believe that Bobadilla arrived in any capacity other than as the judge whose appointment he had solicited so repeatedly. He awaited with impatience the receipt of some letter or message of notification from the newcomer, and when none came, addressed him a courteous letter of welcome and congratulation. To this no reply was received, and seized with anxious forebodings, the Admiral left Conception and moved to the village of Bonao, nearer San Domingo, to inform himself of the real posture of affairs in that town.

It seemed to him incredible that the sovereigns should propose to invade his clearly defined prerogatives at the very moment when he had restored order in the colony, and was free to execute those plans for enriching the royal coffers which he pursued with such persistent and unfortunate loyalty. Just before the news of Bobadilla's appearance reached him, he had prepared a report for transmission to Ferdinand and Isabella in which he was able to announce the suppression of all armed insurrection among the rebellious colonists, and the establishment of peaceful relations with the natives. In this document he informs his sovereigns that the Indians were so completely pacified that a Spaniard could pass alone from one end of the island to the other without fear of molestation, and that the island would

surely yield, without any violent effort being made, a revenue of sixty millions of maravedies during the current year, which the now assured exploitation of the gold mines would increase to 120,000 golden *pesos* by 1503. He also says that it is his intention to gather the natives together into large settlements, so that they may be more readily controlled and taught the Christian faith, and affirms that it will be easy to bring them to serve the Crown with as much loyalty as the inhabitants of Castile. More than this, he adds, it is his purpose to despatch Don Bartholomew without further delay to build a fort on the mainland of Paria, and establish a permanent traffic with the people of that continent for the pearls they hold so cheap. From their great plenty he believes it to be no exaggeration to say that their Majesties may expect to derive from such a settlement a barrellful of these precious articles each year. With such hopes and schemes filling his mind he was little prepared for the news which reached him from Don Diego.

He had, however, heard as yet but an insignificant part of what had occurred in San Domingo. As if Fortune had decreed that no element of tragedy should be wanting from the overthrow of the man she used so capriciously, even the circumstances of Bobadilla's arrival involved a cruel disappointment for the Admiral. It was early on the morning of a Sunday, the 23rd of August, that the inhabitants of the seaport saw two caravels in the offing trying to make the anchorage in the face of the land breeze. Don Diego at once conjectured that they were the vessels sent from Spain in answer to the Admiral's appeal, and assumed that on board one of them was his nephew and namesake, the Admiral's older son, whose arrival was even more anxiously expected by his father than the assurances of royal approval which he held so dear. To assist the caravels in making a speedier entry, and hasten his nephew's arrival, Don Diego at once sent out three of his attendants in a boat manned by Indian rowers. On reaching the nearest vessel the messengers inquired whether Don Diego the younger was on board. Bobadilla himself answered the hail and said that the Admiral's son was not aboard; but



that he, the speaker, had been sent out by their Majesties in answer to the Admiral's request, as judge to investigate and punish the disorders in the island. In reply to various questions, the messengers stated that Columbus and his brothers had already accomplished this, that in the past week seven rebels had been hung in the town, that Guevara and four companions were to be hanged very soon, and that the Admiral and Don Bartholomew were in the interior searching for the few insurgents who had eluded capture, and for whom the same fate was reserved. Having thus, either maliciously or innocently, put the new governor in possession of all he required to know for determining his course of action, the messengers returned to land and reported to Don Diego. Their account created, as might be expected, a profound commotion among the townspeople. The Admiral's friends foresaw at least a renewal of the old intrigues and disputes, while his ill-wishers—and they were in the great majority—hailed the prospect of airing their grievances afresh. As soon as wind and tide permitted the vessels to anchor near the landing place, the citizens swarmed out to them, bent on making friends with the new judge and drawing their own conclusions as to the best manner of setting their individual sails. Bobadilla had no difficulty in extracting all the information he wanted from the obsequious throng without betraying his own intentions, and pleading some excuse for not landing that day, he announced his intention of publicly proclaiming his commission in the city church the next morning at the conclusion of Mass. The sight of two gallows with a couple of corpses dangling from them, plainly visible from his decks, may have given him food for more protracted reflection.

The absence of any conciliatory or even formal communication from Bobadilla was ample indication to Don Diego that trouble was brewing. As governor of the city and delegate for the Admiral he was entitled to expect the observance of that punctilious etiquette which forms so large a part of Spanish official intercourse. Taking counsel with Rodrigo Perez, the mayor, and Miguel Diaz, commandant

of the fortress, he decided to leave the initiative with Bobadilla, and act as circumstances demanded. It was with no light heart that he and his small body of devoted adherents entered the crowded church on the following morning. Bobadilla arrived with a retinue of brand-new officials and a formidable body-guard. The service was disposed of with as much or as little reverence as the prevalent excitement allowed, and the whole congregation adjourned to before the church doors, the usual place for the promulgation of official acts. Calling upon the notary who accompanied him, Bobadilla caused to be read the commission issued to him in May of the previous year, in which he was appointed judge of the island, with special reference to the disorders reported by the Admiral. There was nothing in this to alarm Don Diego, and when, the reading terminated, Bobadilla summoned him as the Admiral's representative to deliver up the prisoners lying under sentence of death, together with all the papers in their cases, preparatory to the opening of a new trial, Don Diego was able to reply with unassailable logic that this exceeded his powers, since the authority of his brother, as Viceroy, was supreme in the island; but that he would instantly submit the whole question to him if Bobadilla would favor him with transcripts of his commission. To this the new judge answered that if Don Diego had no power to act he had no need of a transcript, and betook himself back to his ships. The next morning the church was again crowded, upon the probability of a renewal of the contest between the rival officials. At the end of the Mass Bobadilla again demanded the attention of the throng, and caused to be read the second royal commission given him, in which he was appointed Governor of the Indies. This done, and a formal certificate thereof signed by the notary, Bobadilla repeated his summons of the day before. Don Diego, showing a front which proved him to be made of the same metal as his brothers, responded that he gladly acknowledged the force of any royal decree, and would assuredly respect its mandates, but that he could not deliver up his prisoners except with the approval of the Viceroy, whose powers must

necessarily be supreme since they were perpetual and unconditioned. To him the whole subject would be referred, and he would promptly act as was best for their Majesties' interests. Seeing that this determined but respectful stand was making an impression upon the crowd, Bobadilla decided to show his whole hand. He directed the notary to read the third warrant, issued by the King and Queen the year before, wherein the Admiral and his brothers were specifically called upon to deliver up the royal fortresses and property to the new governor, and to yield him implicit obedience. In order to win over the colonists more completely to his side, he also caused to be read a codicil, dated in May of the current year, 1500, authorizing Bobadilla to pay all arrears of salary and wages, whether due by the Crown or by the Admiral, out of the revenues of the island, in preference to any other expenditure "in such manner that the people shall receive all that they are entitled to and may have no cause for complaint." As this was one of their main grievances against Columbus,—albeit his inability to pay them was due wholly to their own rebellious acts,—the populace instantly saw that they were likely to gain far more from the complaisance of this new ruler than they had from the sturdy justice of the Viceroy, and received the royal decrees with extravagant acclamations. So far as San Domingo was concerned, Bobadilla had won the day, and there was little reason to doubt that the rest of the island would receive him with equal enthusiasm.

Once more the demand was made for the surrender of Guevara and his companions, and again Don Diego replied as before. To this Bobadilla answered that he would take them by force, and forthwith marched his command to the fortress. This was held by Miguel Diaz, Garay's associate in the discovery of the Bonao goldfields and a loyal officer of the Admiral. In reply to Bobadilla's summons he appeared between the turrets of the edifice and paid ceremonious attention to the reading of the royal decrees. This finished, and a formal demand made for the delivery of the fortress and its prisoners, the doughty captain in his turn asked for copies of the documents, alleging that he

held his ward for the King and Queen under commission from the Admiral, his master, who had discovered and subdued these lands, and that when his superior ordered he would do all required by him. Seeing that there was but small chance of overpersuading such obdurate loyalty, Bobadilla sent to the ships for all his armed followers and his sailors, and called upon the multitude to arm themselves and join him in the reduction of the stronghold. Nothing loth, the citizens hastened to his support, protesting that if there were one thing they desired more ardently than another it was to show their cheerful obedience to the royal authority. With this formidable array, Bobadilla returned to the fortress late in the day, and repeated his demand that the doors should be thrown open. Miguel Diaz at once stepped out on the walls, accompanied by Diego de Alvarado, one of the Admiral's secretaries, both holding their naked swords in their hands, and declared that he had no recourse except to reaffirm what he had said earlier in the day. Without further parley the new governor ordered an assault to be made upon the place; scaling ladders were run up against the walls, and a heavy timber brought to bear against the door. Under this furious onslaught the doors yielded, and the attacking party found itself face to face with Diaz and Alvarado, now standing in passive protest at the entrance of the building. Bobadilla at once sent for the prisoners, and after asking them a few questions turned them over to his own constable. There being nothing more to do, he dismissed the mob, left a guard in the fortress and returned to his vessels. The authority of the Viceroy was at an end.

These drastic measures were but the prelude to what was to follow. The new governor, recognizing the justice, under the Spanish laws, of the claim for evidence of his authority made by both Don Diego and Miguel Diaz, now had formal copies of the decrees made, and despatched an officer, bearing the wand of justice, into the interior with them for the information of the Admiral, Don Bartholomew, Roldan, and the colonists at large. To Roldan he wrote a letter promising substantial advantages if he quickly recognized

the new authority. To the Admiral and his brother he neither wrote nor sent a word. When the messenger reached the Admiral in Bonao and presented his notification, the Admiral declined to admit the interpretation claimed for it by Bobadilla. He was Viceroy and Perpetual Governor General of the islands, he averred, and no decree could displace him. The intention of these present ones was only to constitute Bobadilla judge and governor in so far as the administration of justice was involved. In assertion of his right, he formally summoned the messenger and all others present to render him continued obedience as Viceroy and Governor in all that concerned the general interests, and to recognize the authority of Bobadilla in all that related to judicial matters. In doing this, Columbus was acting well within his legal rights. To have done less would have been to abdicate his rank, title, and prerogatives, and seriously impaired the value of his subsequent protests. The powers given Bobadilla were invested with none of the extraordinary solemnities attending the issuance of the Admiral's patents, and for him to have yielded to them at the first demand would have been tantamount to a confession that his own chartered rights rested on no more secure tenure than the caprice of his sovereigns. In employing the means he did to safeguard these, he implied no disrespect to his sovereigns, their mandates or their commissioner. It is as unreasonable to expect him to have done otherwise as it would have been suicidal for him to let Bobadilla's curt announcement pass without remonstrance. As yet he had only partial information of what had occurred in San Domingo, and after his recent experiences with Roldan and Hojeda,—to say nothing of his recollections of Boil, Margarite, and Aguado,—he could not suffer a summary demand for his acquiescence in his own deposition to become effective through his failure to expostulate.

No time was lost by the messenger in advising the new governor of the position taken by the Admiral. Knowing his devotion to the Church and its ministers, Bobadilla immediately sent a Franciscan friar, accompanied by Velas-

quez, the newly appointed royal treasurer, into Bonao with the brief letter from the King and Queen to Columbus which they had written at the time of signing the decrees.<sup>1</sup> By the time they reached him the Admiral was in possession of more detailed information from his brother as to the governor's proceedings, and was better able to appreciate the extent of the dispositions made for his overthrow. The conversations he held with the Franciscan and Velasquez convinced him that any attempt to maintain his own authority would be worse than futile. He accordingly decided to accompany them back to San Domingo, and thence sail for Spain to lay his protest before Ferdinand and Isabella. Sending couriers to Don Bartholomew and Roldan, who were still in Xaragua, he set out to meet his latest rival in the town which had so lately been the capital of the world he had given to Spain.

Even with all the lessons of the past to darken his anticipations of the immediate future, Columbus could not have imagined a condition of affairs approaching the reality. Using as a pretext his unwillingness to put himself at once in Bobadilla's power, the latter had taken possession of the Admiral's residence, seized his books, papers, maps, and journals, appropriated his personal treasure of gold, jewels, plate, and rare curiosities, and the horses in his stables. To gain still further the approbation of the colonists, he announced that this was done in order to provide in part for the payment of the wages due the ill-treated settlers. He followed up this act of brigandage by proclaiming the abolition of the tithes due the Crown upon all the products of the colony, and the removal of all restrictions, for twenty years, upon the free mining of gold. Hereafter the colonists were only to pay the royal treasury the one-eleventh part of the precious metal secured, instead of the third as before. These concessions were obviously aimed at the strict, not to say harsh, control which Columbus had invariably exercised over the mining privileges,—as he was in duty bound,—but they were not needed to convince the people of the complete and ignominious collapse of their

<sup>1</sup> See p. 304, *ante*.



late Viceroy's rule. Roldan and his colleagues in their moments of wildest excess had always maintained some semblance of respect for the finder and founder of the new empire; they could never altogether lose sight of his pre-eminent deeds and persistent defiance of difficulties. But this new man showed no more concern for the Admiral and Viceroy than if the latter had been one of the crop-eared convicts who was serving his time on the island, and quickly taking their cue from him, the worthy colonists vied with one another in urging the governor to heap fresh affronts upon his luckless predecessor. Yielding — not reluctantly — to their persistent clamor, Bobadilla set on foot an investigation of their charges against Columbus. This he assumed, or pretended, he was authorized to do by the text of his appointment as Judge, and in order to remove all possibility of constraint on the part of intending witnesses, he announced that the testimony would be taken in secret. We may imagine the glow of joyous exultation with which this prospect was greeted by the scores of vagabonds, pardoned rebels, and worthless rascals of all sorts, who had felt the hardships of strictly enforced discipline or the pains of merited punishment at the hands of the Admiral, his brothers, or his delegates. In their eagerness to vent their malignity, they ignored the first requirement of credible evidence, and, by placing no control upon their foul tongues, produced such a mass of black besmirchment, that the Admiral's most venomous enemy could not have put faith in their allegations. That Bobadilla allowed them to run on unchecked, reflects as little credit on his perspicacity as on his sense of decency, and we must turn to the records of the then recently established Inquisition itself for a parallel to this parody of justice.

Harking back to the dark days which followed the settlement of Isabella, seven years before, the "witnesses" rehashed all the charges brought against Columbus by Bernal Diaz de Pisa, Fray Boil, and Aguado. He intentionally starved his colonists, they swore; compelled the sick and fever-stricken wretches to labor at the hardest kinds of tasks; scourged them mercilessly when they filched

a handful of wheat to stay the pangs of hunger; and hanged those who dared to leave the camp in search of the necessary food he refused them. He also hanged "many" Spaniards for other trifling misdeeds, and especial emphasis was laid upon his prodigal waste of Castilian blood. To the horror of the pious and godly men who were now swearing away his life, he would not permit the clergy to baptize the Indians *en masse*, his evident purpose being to retain them in heathenism so as to sell them for slaves.<sup>1</sup> Although all the perjured scamps who testified had a quarrel against him because he refused them all the slaves they wished to hold, they accused him of stirring up revolts among the Indians, and then "unjustly" enslaving them for shipment to Spain. He purposely withheld licenses to work the gold mines, they declared, so as to hide the real wealth of the island from Ferdinand and Isabella, with intent to make a treasonable bargain with some other monarch. Of his rank and perverse cruelty in connection with the insurrection of Moxica they could not say enough. Finally, they swore that the real reason he had not come instantly into San Domingo and submitted to the new governor, was because he was collecting the Indians together with the intention of attacking the city and forcing Bobadilla to return to Spain. What they testified of the Admiral they repeated of his brothers, and when their depositions were combined there was material enough to hang a regiment of such arrant traitors as these Genoese.

The governor professed to believe all this mass of vicious contradictions. His first step was to arrest Don Diego, clap chains about his ankles, and confine him on board one of the caravels in the harbor. This done, he awaited the arrival of the Admiral, who was daily expected. As soon as he reached the town, Columbus went to the government-

<sup>1</sup> Even Las Casas, whose proudest title was "Defender of the Indians," says that Columbus would have committed "a great sacrilege" had he allowed the sacrament of baptism to be conferred on the natives without sufficient preparation. If he was satisfied that the Admiral's conduct in this respect was orthodox, we may safely assume as much.

house, or "palace," where Bobadilla had taken up his residence. He found the governor surrounded by his staff and obsequious attendants. Without permitting the Admiral to say a word, or himself vouchsafing one in explanation, Bobadilla called upon the bystanders to seize him and ordered him to be placed in irons. To their credit, not a man moved. Despite all that malice could invent and shamelessness assert, this gray-haired sailor was Viceroy of the Indies, discoverer of the new world, and grandee of Spain. They might be willing to plot against him, lie about him, and seek his downfall for their own advantage; but between that and treating him as only the vilest malefactor was treated lay a gulf they had not the brazen effrontery to cross. The deadly quiet which fell on the assemblage was broken by the advance of one of the Admiral's former cooks, Espinosa by name, who volunteered to perform the infamous service. Offering no resistance to an outrage whose very magnitude benumbed his powers of speech and reason, the Admiral was shackled and led at once to the fortress, where he was placed in solitary confinement, with strict injunctions to his jailers that no one should visit or converse with him. Within a day or two Bobadilla sent to demand that he write to Don Bartholomew, summoning him to San Domingo and warning him under no circumstances to touch a hair of the prisoners who were in his power in Xaragua. To refuse the order was to subject his brother to a worse fate than had befallen himself, and the Admiral hastened to send a letter to the Adelantado, counselling him to obey the governor's mandate with alacrity, warning him of the lot which certainly was in store for him, but adjuring him not to attempt to resist it since they would both go to Castile where their Majesties could not fail to avenge their wrongs. Don Bartholomew, stifling the natural suggestions of his nature, complied with this appeal as speedily as the distance allowed, and upon arriving at San Domingo was instantly fettered and sent on board the caravel to join Don Diego. The abject position of the once all-powerful brothers afforded an opportunity for the venting of the popular hatred which was too rare to be lost. This took the

form of opprobrious pasquinades and verses, which were shouted through the streets and placarded at the corners. A successful mob is apt to be much the same all the world over, and in their hour of triumph the graceless adventurers of Hispaniola wallowed in the mire of their own shame with all the complacency of their kind. One crowning spectacle was reserved for their delectation, when the wan and broken Admiral was taken from the fortress, and sent on board the caravel which held his brothers. To see the man, who, as delegate of their King and Queen, had only four short weeks before ruled the western half of the known world, marched to the beach between his guards, and shipped on board a vessel to cross in chains the Ocean over which he had exercised the lofty rank of Admiral, was indeed a precious boon, and many there were to enjoy it. It is not surprising that when Bobadilla's deputy, Alonso de Vallejo, entered the cell where he was confined, Columbus should suppose that he came to announce his execution. "Where are you taking me, Vallejo?" he inquired. "Your Worship is going aboard ship to set sail," was the response. "Is that the truth, Vallejo?" queried again his prisoner. "I swear by the life of your Worship that we are going to embark," reiterated the officer. Columbus knew his jailer to be a man of honor, and believed him. Dismissing his own apprehensions, he accepted his fate with dignity, confident that in Spain he would receive justice.

The two caravels which carried Columbus and his brothers were the same that had brought out Bobadilla and his retinue. They left the harbor of San Domingo early in October under the command of Vallejo, who was especially charged by Bobadilla to deliver the three prisoners, ironed as they were, to Bishop Fonseca immediately upon reaching Cadiz. Vallejo, although he showed throughout the voyage a respectful and sympathetic anxiety to alleviate the distress of his illustrious captives, was chosen by the governor on account of his close relations with Fonseca. Both in this and in the instructions just quoted, the action of Bobadilla furnishes strong evidence that his whole proceeding was but the fulfilment of a deliberate programme con-

certed before his departure for Hispaniola. To what extent Ferdinand and Isabella were cognizant of it, or how it was possible for Fonseca to assume to perpetrate so wanton and daring an outrage without their consent, is as yet a mystery. All the responsibility was ultimately thrown on Bobadilla, and charged to his mistaken zeal and excess of powers; but if the King and Queen were ignorant of his intentions and plans he is to be credited with a degree of audacious independence absolutely without parallel in the records of Castilian government.

Columbus himself did not suspect the loyalty of his sovereigns. Without pretending to comprehend the details of the plot, or the causes which rendered possible its success, he attributed his downfall to the machinations of his powerful enemies at Court. That they had impressed, to a certain extent, the King and Queen with their allegations he could not question; but he permitted no doubt to disturb the confidence with which he looked forward to their prompt repudiation of Bobadilla's acts and his own immediate restoration to his rank and dignities. That he had trodden for the last time the soil of Hispaniola as its Governor, issued his last orders as her Viceroy, and planned his last scheme of improvement and administration for her colony, never crossed his mind. There was bitterness enough and to spare in the reflections which crowded upon him as the vessel slowly bore him, a shackled felon, along the beautiful southern coast of the lordly island. Every headland spoke of an ambition blighted, every bay of a righteous purpose thwarted, every distant mountain peak of the defeat of some cherished plan of further exploration. Past Cape Engaño, Saona, and Mona; past the noble bulk of Porto Rico; across the stormless sea studded with the grand array of towering islands which bore the names he had conferred upon them, when they were seen for the first time by Christian eyes; and so on to the crowning splendors of Guadalupe and Dominique, the little caravels held their way. For 700 miles they had to sail, before the broken-hearted man upon their decks could look out over the blue waters without seeing some tangible evidence of the great

deeds he had done. Only when the hazy outlines of the last of the Caribs' islands had sunk from view was Columbus free from the associations of his achievements,—and even then he had about him that Ocean Sea whose first Admiral he had been. With what a poignant sting must his mind have reverted to that swelling verse of Seneca's, of which he had made such proud use in earlier days, when he claimed so boldly to be able to “break the bonds of Ocean” if he had but three small ships! He had now but to stir a foot, and the clank of iron preached a whole homily on the vanity of life. What a mockery the whole thing was, at best. The acclamations of the simple islanders of Guanahaní, who saw in his bearded followers the messengers of Heaven; the *vivas* of the crowded street, in Seville and Barcelona; the studied attentions of King, Queen, and Court; the victories over heathen warriors and Christian rebels in Hispaniola; the persistent battle with, and final conquest of, disease, starvation, and danger; the voyages into the unknown South; the adding of an empire to the possessions of his sovereigns,—what did all these amount to? The fetters on his ankles weighed far more.

“If my grievance against the world is a new one, its fashion of maltreating mankind is old.” So did Columbus open the letter in which he made his protest against his bonds. It was addressed neither to King nor Queen, but to Doña Juana de la Torres, sister of that Antonio de Torres who had so often commanded the squadrons bound to or from the Indies. The choice of his correspondent was due to her intimate relations with Queen Isabella, and to his confidence in her effective use of his communication. His latest appeals to their Majesties in person had been answered by the appointment of Bobadilla, and it is not strange that in seeking another method of approaching them he used the influential friendship of the Torres family. The customs of the Court were not unknown to him. What he might write to Doña Juana could reach the Queen's hands without the knowledge of Fonseca or other enemies. Once before the Queen, he trusted to his simple appeal to



revive her recollections of his services and her sense of justice.

"I came with such devoted affection to serve these Princes," he writes, "and have served them with a devotion the equal of which has never been seen or heard of. Our Lord has made me the messenger of that new heaven and new earth of which he spoke by St. John in the Apocalypse and by the mouth of Isaiah, and has shown me where to find it. Among all others there was skepticism, but to the Queen, my sovereign Lady, He gave the spirit of comprehension and great courage, making her the inheritor of it all as though she were His beloved and cherished daughter. I went to take possession of all this in her royal name. . . . Seven years were passed in discussing this enterprise and nine in its performance, during which time deeds were done of signal excellence and worthy of all remembrance. Of their extent no one can form an idea. I returned, and I do not hesitate to say that there is no one so low that he does not plan to insult me. The world looks upon him as virtuous who is not willing to do the same. If I had stolen the Indies, or the continent which lies in front of them (about which there is now some talk at the seat of St. Peter)<sup>1</sup> and given them to the Moors, I could not be shown in all Spain any one so unfriendly to me as is the Queen. Who could have supposed this where always such magnanimity has been shown?"

The allusion to the change of feeling apparent in the Queen naturally raises the question of Ferdinand's motives for misjudging him.

"I thought that this recent voyage to Paria would reconcile him somewhat by reason of the discovery of pearls, and also the finding of the new gold mines in Hispaniola. I left orders with the natives to gather together the pearls and to fish for more and agreed to return and get them later on: in my belief they would have secured a bushel of them. If I did not write this to their Majesties, it is because I wished to have the same amount of gold gathered before informing them, but this resulted as have so many other things. If I had sought my own advantage and allowed Hispaniola to be ruined, or if my privileges and contracts had been respected, I should have lost neither those treasures nor my honor."

<sup>1</sup> Alluding, apparently, to the proposed Bull extending the Spanish jurisdiction to the mainland discovered by Columbus and explored by Hojeda, Pinzon, Guerra, etc. The passage is obscure.

He then recites his conflicts with the insurgent Indians, Roldan, Hojeda, and Moxica. Speaking of the hanging of the latter, he writes:—

“I had determined not to touch a hair of any one’s head, but this man, although it cost me tears, it was impossible to spare as I had intended. To my own brother I should not have done otherwise, had he proposed to murder me and wrest from me the government which my King and Queen had entrusted to my charge.”

Referring to the arrival of Bobadilla, he gives a summary of his own attitude on learning of it:—

“Six months before, I was already prepared to go to their Majesties with the good tidings of the finding of the new mines and to escape from governing such abandoned people, who fear neither God nor King nor Queen, and are full of strife and evil deeds. I was ready to pay them off with 600,000 maravedies, for which I had 4,000,000 due me from the tithes, and more, without counting the third part of the gold. Before leaving Spain I begged their Majesties many times to send out, at my expense, some one who should be charged with the administration of justice, and after I learned of the Judge’s rebellion I asked yet again either for some additional men, or at the least for some servant of the royal household with letters of authority,—for my own credit is such that although I should build churches and hospitals, they would always be called dens of thieves. At length their Majesties acted, but in a way very opposite to that demanded by the situation. Let it pass, since it is as they wish. I was out there [in Hispaniola] for two years without being able to secure a single provision in favor of myself or of the people who went there, but this new man brought a chest full of them. . . . If their Majesties should be pleased to disprove a report which is common among those familiar with my trials,—that greater harm has been done me by the evil tongues of men than my long service in augmenting their glory and royal estate has been able to shield me from,—it would be a charity and I would be restored to my rank. Matters were at this point when the Commander Bobadilla<sup>1</sup> arrived at San Domingo. I was in the Vega and the Adelantado in Xaragua, where this Adrian de Moxica had made headway at first; but everything was now

<sup>1</sup> He was *Commendador* or K.C. of the military Order of Calatrava.

quiet, the country prosperous and peace reigning. The second day after his arrival he proclaimed himself Governor, named his officers, and exercised authority ; declared the remission of tithes and taxes on gold as well as on everything else for 20 years, — which, as I have said, is for a man's lifetime, — announced that he had come to pay everybody, although the people had not up to that time performed their duty ; and openly asserted that he was going to send me and my brothers away in chains, as he has done, and that neither I nor any of my race should ever return ; besides saying a thousand other indecent and unmannerly things about me. All this he did on the second day of his presence, I being absent and knowing nothing either of him or of his coming. Moreover, he took a number of their Majesties' letters, of which he had a large quantity signed in blank, and sent them to Roldan and his followers filled out with privileges and allotments of Indians. To me he sent neither letter nor messenger, nor has he done so until this day. Let your Excellency reflect : what would any one who was in my position think of such a proceeding, — honoring and rewarding him who had striven to deprive their Majesties of their possessions and had done so much damage and harm, and humiliating him who had, at the cost of such sacrifices, defended it all ? When I learned of this, I supposed that it would be only another case like that of Hojeda, or one of the others who followed him ; I was relieved when I heard from the priests that their Majesties had indeed sent him out. I wrote him that his coming was at a fortunate time ; that I was already disposed to go to Spain, and had ordered an auction of all I had ; that he should not be hasty in proclaiming these remissions ; that I would deliver over to him the administration and government as smooth as the palm of my hand ; and I wrote the same to the priests who were with him. Neither he nor they replied a word ; instead, he assumed a warlike tone, and bestowed rewards upon all who went to the town and swore allegiance to him as Governor, — for twenty years, they told me. As soon as I heard of this affair of the remissions, I thought to correct a mistake so grave, and that he would be pleased, for he had granted them without reason or necessity, giving to idle vagabonds a boon too great even for respectable settlers who had their wives and children with them. Therefore I published both by speech and by letters that he could not make such use of his powers, because mine were the more authoritative ; and I reminded the people of the remissions offered by Juan Aguado. All this I did to gain time, so that their Majesties might receive news of the real state of the island and should have cause to

send out such orders concerning it as should be for their interests. It is, in truth, idle to proclaim such remissions in the Indies. For those settlers who have received their locations, it is worthless; they were given the best lands, which, by the end of their four years of service, will be worth 200,000 maravedies at the least, without their owners striking a pick into them. . . . I had arranged with these settlers that they should pay the third of the gold extracted and the tithes on other products; this I did at their own solicitation and they looked upon it as an act of great liberality on the part of their Majesties. When I heard that they were neglecting the payment I called them to account, and they supposed that he [Bobadilla] would act as I did; but it happened contrariwise. He incited them against me, saying that I wished to take from them what their Majesties were willing they should keep, and he tried to throw me on my back. This he did, and then proposed that the settlers should write to their Majesties praying that they would not reinstate me in my office, —and so pray I, both for myself and for all belonging to me, as long as there is not another population. Besides this, he arranged with them for investigations of such baseness that Hell itself never knew of their equal. Our Lord, who succored Daniel and the three children with such might and wisdom and such an exhibition of power, can, if he so pleases, release me with his will alone. I myself would have known how to remedy both this and all the rest which has been mentioned or which has occurred since I came to the Indies, if my conscience had allowed me to seek my own advantage and it had been honorable for me to do so. But the duty of maintaining justice and adding to the dominions of their Majesties up to this time holds me fast. Yet now so much gold is being found that there is a difference of opinion as to whether the greater profit lies in going on a plundering expedition, or going to the mines. For a woman 100 ducats are as freely given as for a plantation, and the thing is common. There are many dealers who make a business of buying young Indian girls; all ages bring a good price.

“I repeat that, in saying that Bobadilla had no power to grant remissions, I was doing just what he wanted me to do, although my only object was to gain time for their Majesties to hear from the island and send again to direct what they deemed best. I repeat, that the influence of the misrepresentations of those I thwarted has done me more harm than my services have availed me for good—an evil precedent this, both for the present and the future. I swear that a great number of men have gone to the Indies who do not deserve a cup of water at the hands of either God or man, and now they propose to go back. Boba-

dilla set them all against me, and he appears from his actions and manner to have come out already disposed and eager for this; at least it is said that he spent much in order to come out on this mission; I do not know any more than I hear. I have never heard before of an investigator going to the rebels and taking their evidence as witnesses against him who ruled them, and so with others entitled to no credence and unworthy of it. If their Majesties should send and hold a general investigation, I declare to you that they will be astonished that the island does not sink [beneath its weight of iniquity].

“Your Excellency shall remember, I am sure, that when the tempest drove me into Lisbon without sails, I was falsely accused of having gone there to deliver the Indies over to the King [of Portugal]. Later on their Majesties knew the truth, and that it was all said from malice. Ignorant as I may be, I do not know of any one who considers me so dull that I do not realize that, even if the Indies were my own property, I could not retain them without the aid of some Prince. If this be so, where could I find greater support and certainty of not being cast from them than with the King and Queen our sovereigns, who have raised me from nothing to so great honor, and who are the most puissant monarchs both by land and sea in the whole world? Their Majesties know how I have served them, and will respect my privileges and grants; and if any one should infringe them their Majesties will restore them to me with increase,—as was done at the time of Juan Aguado,—and will command that much honor be shown me. As I have just said, their Majesties have received benefits at my hands and have my sons among their attendants, and this condition of affairs could not obtain with any other Prince, for where no love is all else fails.

“I have related how I wrote to the friars and set out at once entirely alone, both because most of my people were with the Adelantado, and in order to disarm any suspicion he [Bobadilla] might have. As soon as he heard of this he seized Don Diego and sent him, loaded with irons, on board a caravel. As soon as I arrived, he did the same, and afterwards, when the Adelantado arrived, treated him in like manner. I neither held further converse with him, nor did he permit any one to speak with me, to the present day; and I solemnly swear that I cannot imagine why I was arrested. . . . I have been deeply wronged in that an inquisitor has been sent out against me who is assured that if the report he makes about me is very serious he will remain as Governor in my stead. Would that it had been Our Lord’s will that their Majesties had sent him or some one else two years ago; because I know that I should now be free from

reproach and calumny, and my honor should neither have been taken from me nor would I have lost it. God is just and will sooner or later make known why and how this was done.

“The news of the gold which I said above I would relate are, that on Christmas Day [1499], I being in great distress, set upon by the rebellious Christians and Indians and on the point of abandoning everything and escaping, if possible, with my life, Our Lord comforted me miraculously, and said: ‘Courage! do not fear or lose heart. I will remedy all. The seven years of the golden period are not yet passed, and in this and in the other matter I will give you relief.’ That same day I learned of 80 leagues of territory throughout all of which there were mines of gold. The opinion concerning them now is that it is all one mine. Some men have collected 120 ducats in one day, others 90, and even 250 have been found. With some from 50 to 70, and with many from 20 to 50 are considered a good day’s yield, and many are continuing to gain this. The most ordinary return is from 6 to 12, and whoever secures less than this is not satisfied. These mines appear also to be like those others, which do not yield the same each day; but both the mines and the miners are new. The general opinion is that even if all Spain were to go there the most ignorant person could gather not less than one or two ducats, even when all is so new. To be sure, this is done by those who have an Indian to help them, but the matter depends on the Christian. See what kind of judgment Bobadilla showed in giving up everything for nothing, and abandoning 4,000,000 of maravedies in tithes, without cause or necessity, and without first consulting their Majesties. And this is not the only harm that has been done.

“I know that my errors have not been committed for the purpose of doing evil, and I believe that their Majesties are convinced that this is true. I see and know that even toward those who intentionally injure them they show clemency, and therefore feel well assured that they will show far greater and more generous forgiveness toward me, who have fallen into mistake through ignorance and the force of circumstances, of which I am the victim, as they shall learn abundantly hereafter; and that they will regard my labors and realize each day how they have been benefited thereby. They will weigh the whole matter in the scales, as we are told in the Holy Scriptures the good and the evil shall be weighed at the Judgment Day. If, however, they direct that some one else shall judge me,—which I do not anticipate,—and that this be done by a report obtained from the Indies, most humbly do I entreat them to send there



two persons of integrity and reputation, at my cost, who shall very easily discover that 5 marks of gold can be found in 4 hours: whether they do this or not, it is very needful that some provision be made in the premises.

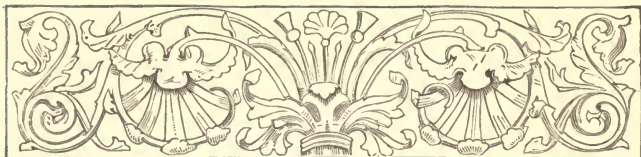
“As soon as the Commander arrived at San Domingo he took up his quarters in my house, and treated everything he found as belonging to himself. Let it pass; perhaps he needed it! Nevertheless, never did pirate thus treat merchant whom he had seized. I have the greatest grievance against him by reason of my writings, all of which he took in the same manner, so that I have never been able to secure a single one; and those which would be of the most advantage in my defence are the ones he has hidden away the most carefully. Behold what a righteous and honest Judge! . . . God, Our Lord, is over all with His power and wisdom, as always; He punishes all offences, and especially the injuries committed by the ungrateful.”

Whether Columbus wrote this letter on board the caravel, as some affirm, or immediately upon reaching Cadiz, as others think, is not material. A rough draft of it, in his handwriting,<sup>1</sup> which is in existence, seems to indicate that it was at least prepared during the passage, although it may have been written out and expanded when he arrived in Spain. As it stands, it is his defence against the outrages perpetrated by Bobadilla and the too great readiness of Ferdinand and Isabella to give heed to the allegations of the Admiral's enemies. Disconnected and often obscure, to a degree unusual even in his hastiest productions, it reflects the mental stress to which he had been subjected, and the agitation with which he looked forward to meeting his sovereigns. His modern accusers see in it the evidences of a “much-vexed conscience,” charge him with deliberate misrepresentation, and with an “aberration of mind” resulting from his “besetting cupidity.” They

<sup>1</sup> This draft is notable by reason of two personal statements. Columbus therein speaks of having “lost my youth” in the enterprise of the Indies, and of having “left wife and sons” to prosecute it. The first allusion is incompatible with the generally accepted theory as to his advanced age, and the second to the equally common assumption that his connection with Doña Beatriz de Enriquez was illicit. We have elsewhere given our reasons for believing him to have been younger than most historians assume, and for considering his relations with Doña Beatriz as *quasi* regular, as viewed by his contemporaries.

reproach him with the glaring inconsistency between his demand to be judged as the commander of a conquered province, and his enthusiastic laudations in his first letters of the pacific and amiable disposition of the Indians. If it were worth while to treat seriously a Criticism whose cardinal principle is a determined ignoring of the fact that the world moves, and that human development is not unvarying in all ages and under all conditions, we might dispute this proposition. But the letter, read in the light of its origin and circumstances, speaks for itself, with all its transparent artifices, its sincerity of purpose, and its sense of helplessness. The man who wrote it was, most assuredly, not the man of 1492. He "knew his world" as he had never known it before. If he had lost his illusions concerning the Edenic guilelessness of the inhabitants of his new world, he had fared no better in his estimate of "the King and Queen, our sovereigns." He had learned that all his high hopes,—his fantastic dreams, if you so please,—about the destiny of these wonderful lands, were subordinated by his royal master, if not by the Queen as well, to the practical question,—How much revenue will your new world yield us?

The two caravels arrived at Cadiz on the 25th of November. The Court was at Granada, deeply engaged with the subjugation of the rebellious Moors. Vallejo lost no time in reporting his arrival to Ferdinand and Isabella, and even stretched his sympathy for the Admiral so far as to permit the latter's letters to reach Granada before Bobadilla's official despatches. The news that "their Admiral" had been sent to Spain in a felon's chains is supposed to have grievously wounded the sensibilities of both monarchs; perhaps the courageous intervention of Doña Juana Torres, and their own quick realization that Bobadilla had gone too far, were more nearly the true moving cause. At all events, the King and Queen instantly despatched orders that Columbus and his brothers should be released from confinement, directed that they should come immediately to Granada, and sent him a large sum of money to travel in a state becoming his dignities. Verily the ways of princes are past fathoming.



## XX.

### THE AMEND POLITIC.

IN that same city of Granada where, eight years before, Columbus had entered into his partnership with Ferdinand and Isabella for the discovery and acquisition of the unknown lands he maintained would be found beyond the Western Ocean, he now knelt before the same monarchs and pointed to the chains their deputy had fastened upon him in the Empire he had given to Spain. That his fortitude should have deserted him at the last moment, and sobs for a time prevented the ceremonious utterances due from him to his sovereigns, is not surprising; that they should likewise have shown some emotion at the sight of such a servant in such a plight, saves to their memory the benefit of a doubt concerning their participation in Bobadilla's excesses. Assisting him to rise, the King and Queen, with extreme affability, entered upon the easy task of satisfying the Admiral that his wrongs had their indignant sympathy, and that generous and speedy restitution should be made him for all his sufferings. He in turn entered upon a defence—doubtless both prolix and confused—of his course, protesting that his single aim had ever been to augment their glory and extend their dominions, and that his errors, where such had been committed, had their origin only in a devoted zeal for their service. This they were as ready to believe as he to accept their assurances of continued affection and confidence, and the painful interview ended in a restoration of, at least, apparent cordiality. It was sincere on the Admiral's part, for he had a childish

faith in his royal patrons. Isabella, too, was no doubt in earnest, with a mental reservation as to her intentions regarding the future government of the Western World. Ferdinand, not wholly shameless, may have regretted the manner in which his selfish disregard of the Admiral's rights had been executed, but did not swerve for a moment from the policy he had adopted. Bent upon breaking the authority of Columbus and cancelling his rights, the King felt a merely passing compassion for the consequences to his victim. If the latter was blind enough to trust him still, so much the better.

Columbus and his brothers left the royal presence as free men after this audience of the 17th of December, 1500. That and some partial provision for his pecuniary needs were the immediate extent of the royal grace. Despoiled of rank and estate, thrust aside as a broken tool for which no further use could be found, the Admiral of the Ocean Sea and Viceroy of the Indies found himself occupying the pitiful position of a needy suppliant at a Court where he was considered little better than an encumbrance. The very magnitude and unassailable justice of his demands made them the more irksome to those who had wronged him, while the dogged persistence with which he maintained his rights compelled an attention both their Majesties and their officers would fain have refused. Driven to choose between final repudiation of his claims and diplomatic procrastination, they preferred the latter as more congenial to their scheme of policy. Nothing was simpler than to put off with smooth assurances this credulous explorer, and such were lavished upon him without stint. Believing firmly, as he did, in the sincerity of his sovereigns, and possessed of overwhelming evidence as to the soundness of his pretensions, Columbus awaited the royal verdict with a patience born of long familiarity with the ways of the Court. If he had not now the influence needful to obtain a speedy recognition of his position, he did not doubt the certainty of ultimate success, and prosecuted his cause with untiring solicitude.

Had he reached Spain six months earlier, or six months

later, Columbus might have received a consideration more befitting his transcendent services than was in fact accorded him. Arriving toward the end of the year 1500, he was but one explorer the more returning from the Indies, one whose tale of discovery was two years old, and was backed by no great tokens of success. The idle and curious of Cadiz and Seville had that year surfeited on stories of adventures beyond the Ocean Sea. Guerra had sailed into port in April with his huge store of pearls from the coasts of Paria; Hojeda had followed in June with his cargo of slaves; Lepe was only a few days behind him with his account of a voyage of hundreds of leagues along the shores of the new continent; Vincente Yañez Pinzon returned in September, bringing the report of still further wanderings below the Equator, and of the finding of the gigantic Amazon. All these were far more tangible and stirring achievements to the vulgar mind than was the mere finding of the southern continent two years before. That the later exploits would never have been undertaken but for the Admiral's lead; that to the discoverer belongs a glory greater than that awarded to all his imitators combined, were reflections little likely to disturb the burghers and merchants of Andalusia. They were as keen as any modern politician to realize when a former hero became a "back number," and to his lost prestige at Court Columbus had now to add the loss of popular interest. The newer men jostled him out of the public's memory until he was to all, save a very limited circle, only another and earlier finder of western islands. Almost any man who could sail a caravel might claim to be as much.

There is between the applause of the multitude and the appreciation of the wise a difference like that which lies between a blinding winter gale in the "roaring forties" and the flow of the Trades over a moonlit sea between the Tropics. Columbus knew the distinction and prized the less boisterous and more enduring fame. Possessed of a quiet and immovable faith in the final verdict of the Future upon his deeds, he was never distressed by the defection of the mob's opinion. Apart from his tenacious assertion

that the performances of his imitators were a gross infraction of his vested privileges, he did not make any protest against the credit they derived therefrom: on the contrary, he quickly saw how their more extensive local explorations might serve to further his own larger plans of world-investigation. But there had been two voyages made during his absence from Spain which struck at the very foundation of his fame as an explorer. Sebastian Cabot, for the English, had crossed again the northern seas in 1498, and run down the shores of a great continent lying north of Cuba; and Vasco da Gama, for the Portuguese, had successfully doubled Good Hope and returned, in July, 1499, with the glory of having found an eastern route for the coveted Spice Islands and India. If, on the one hand, Hojeda, Pinzon, and their compeers had proved beyond all cavil the incalculable importance of his own lately discovered southern continent, on the other, Cabot and da Gama threatened to shut off Spain from farther acquisition in the North and in the remoter West. To have his grandiose schemes of universal western exploration thus reduced to the dimensions of the parallels of latitude and meridians of longitude already partly covered, was to crush them almost in embryo. Here was food for deep study and meditation, and matter which transcended in immediate interest even the absorbing question of his assaulted prerogatives.

When we recall the feverish ardor with which the great powers of our day wrangled and disputed in Berlin a few years ago over the partition of the African wilderness,<sup>1</sup> we may feel in some degree the impatience with which Columbus learned, day by day, of the encroachment of rival leaders upon the vast regions he looked upon as being almost his own by right of discovery. That he was deal-

<sup>1</sup> By the bye: might not the explosive virtue of the modern critics of Columbus be more practically employed in arousing the indignation of Christendom against some of the gross injustices perpetrated against the Africans in later days? Or is the good old American plea, that the color of their skin bars their standing in court, still a sufficient reason for turning our backs on their imminent wrongs and venting our anathemas on the lost bones of the mediæval sinner instead?



ing, in these thoughts, with a full one-half of the Earth's surface, did not impress him as extravagant. There had been no second half to the globe until he had demonstrated the fact. Whether one continent or more bounded the Western Ocean was not germane to the question at issue: all that lay beyond the line marked by the Holy Father belonged to Spain until, in sailing ever into the West, the old India of the Greeks and Romans should be reached. If Cabot had found land within those precincts, albeit forty degrees farther north than Guanahani, he was a trespasser. If Vasco da Gama, in sailing eastward around the Cape, had found a means of ultimately reaching Cuba and Paria from that side of the world, he threatened to turn the glory of Spain to the advantage of Portugal. To checkmate these promising projects of the rivals of Castile, and preserve the monopoly of the New World, in its largest sense, to the Crown of Ferdinand and Isabella, became now the absorbing problem with the man they had so ruthlessly degraded. Verily there was some quality in this man other than that one of slave-selling, which he shared with our own fathers. If he was a "speculator," his game was a hemisphere; if he indulged in "hallucinations," they were of bestowing continents upon his King and Queen; if he was a "privateer," his ventures put those of Alexander to shame. To hold him up as devoured with vanity of rank and consumed by avarice for ducats, is to wilfully reverse the lenses of history. Because he vigorously claimed his own in lesser things, is no reason why we should shut our eyes to the splendor of his life's aim. Had he been covetous of wealth he could have had it as few before or since. Where a Guerra succeeded in obtaining pearls by the basketful, it is not likely that he need have failed. The royal charters defined and secured to him his proportion of the returns. It was not his business to collect them, but to carry out his life's-work of bringing the western half of the world under the dominion of his sovereigns. Having broken down the barrier, he could not stand idly by while others rushed in to seize the fruits of his daring sagacity.

As he became more familiar with the results of the voyages which had followed his discovery of Paria, Columbus gradually formed a new theory, destined to exert a lasting influence on the history of the western hemisphere. From Cape St. Augustine, on the coast of the modern Brazil, clear around to and beyond the Gulf of Venezuela, the contour of the great southern continent was now known. In the North, Cabot had traced a coast line extending from the lands of ice and snow down almost to the latitude of Cuba. How many of the details of this English exploration were accessible to Columbus we do not know; it is certain that he would encounter no difficulty in informing himself minutely as to the explorations of the Spanish voyagers. His own discoveries filled in the blank between the end of Cabot's exploration and the northern coasts of Terra Firma as far as the point reached by Hojeda. What lay west of Cuba and the Gulf of Venezuela was, as yet, a mystery, and upon this problem his attention was concentrated. North of Cuba an unbroken continent extended; south of Paria another had been skirted to far below the Equator. Between the two lay an unexplored region of island-studded ocean. To this region Columbus now applied the physical observations he had recorded in discussing the location of the Earthly Paradise, supplemented by the reports of his imitators. The vast flow of fresh water from the Gulf of Paria rushed through the Dragon's Mouth and then turned westward along the shores of Terra Firma. The immeasurable outpouring of the great river Amazon, lately discovered by Pinzon, turned northward and followed a similar course. All the ocean currents between the Caribs' islands had a like set, and so did that which flowed between these and the mainland. So powerful was this westward drift along the shores of Hayti, that he had been wearied in fighting it on both the northern and the southern coasts. As long ago as 1493, Dr. Chanca had written that almost as much time had been expended in beating against this current from Navidad eastward to Monte Christi as had been occupied in the voyage from Spain. The direction of the steadfast prevailing winds was

also to the west, and the general east-and-west lay of the islands pointed to a long persistence of the corroding agency of the ocean acting always on the same lines. The straightaway line of the lately explored northern shores of the new continent reinforced this view. Ignorant of the insular character of Cuba, and of the existence of the mighty Gulf Stream, which, hurrying by its northern shores, discharges back into the Atlantic the inflow of these westerly currents, Columbus connected all of these indications with the discoveries of Cabot and da Gama. Since the Western Ocean was barred to the north by Cabot's land and to the south by his own Parian continent, and since da Gama had at least partially defined the immense extension of the ocean east of Africa, why should not the westward-flowing waters of the Atlantic find their way into those eastern seas through some strait which separated the two continents of the Western World? Were such the case,—and nothing that was known militated against the theory,—the control of that passage would give Spain an inestimable advantage in the long struggle for the Orient's commerce, besides securing for her an easy access to all sides of her new southern continent. In all this argument Columbus still clung to the belief that Cuba and the country to the north of it formed together the easternmost parts of Asia. What the southern land was, if not the Earthly Paradise, no man could conjecture. To its discoverer it was "the infinite land." The known world was a far different affair in the beginning of 1501 from what it had been when he last sailed from Cadiz in 1498. Then, it was what Ptolemy and Marco Polo alleged it to be, plus his own additions to their knowledge. Now, the waste places of ocean were fast filling with the rudely sketched outlines of continental masses, and the realm of mystery was shifted from the Western Ocean to the regions which lay between the new-found hemisphere and the ancient kingdoms of the East. Yet we are soberly invited to consider the man whose work this was as a driveling visionary, consumed with vanity, and having no loftier ambition than the acquisition of an income larger than his neighbor's.

The Admiral laid his latest project before the King and Queen sometime during the summer of 1501. He would sail to the south of Hayti and Cuba, leaving the now ascertained coast of the new continent untouched, and hold a westerly course in the expectation of finding an ocean passage between Asia, as he considered the "lands seen by the Englishmen," and his own more southerly continent. This would, he believed, bring him sooner or later — and rather sooner than later — to the mouths of the Ganges, the Spice Islands, and the Red Sea. It was the dream of the Cuban voyage in 1494 revived and expanded in the light of later and fuller experience. For this purpose he asked for a small fleet of his favorite caravels,—well-armed, of light draught, and fast sailing. The voyage was to be one for exploration only, and he had abundant reason to dread a needless accumulation of human lumber, so the number of his companions was to be no greater than absolutely necessary. He wished his brother, Don Bartholomew, to accompany him, both for his nautical skill and his military prowess. Finally, as he expected to eventually reach the scene of the recent Portuguese exploits in the remote East, he asked for royal letters commending him to the servants of that Crown, as well as for others to the Great Khan and the lesser oriental potentates. In this he was directly recurring to the projects which he cherished on his first voyage in 1492. Then, as now, he anticipated reaching the Courts of Asia. He had learned that they lay farther to the west than he at first thought; but he still considered Cuba and Hayti as lying at the threshold of their dominions. It was only a question of a greater distance than he had before supposed.

To all his proposals Ferdinand and Isabella yielded a ready acquiescence. At one stroke to rid themselves of an importunate suitor, whose mere presence constituted a keen reproach, and, at the same time, to secure the services of the most skilful and intrepid navigator of the age in thwarting the schemes of England and Portugal, was, to use the Spanish phrase, "laying gold on purple velvet." Sharing his impatience to despatch the new expedition as promptly

as possible, they solemnly repledged their kingly honor,—or what was left of it,—to do him rigid and generous justice in the matter of his reclamations against the Crown. If aught befell him on this voyage, they promised that Don Diego, as his oldest son and heir, should inherit intact all his father's dignities and emoluments. Such promises are proverbially of facile birth, but other circumstances besides his abiding faith in the King and Queen disposed Columbus to accept them just now. From all quarters came news of fresh voyages and explorations. Gaspar Cortereal, acting for Portugal, had followed Cabot's lead, and pushed his discoveries far up towards the Arctic Circle. Cabral, in the service of the same Crown, sailing ostensibly for India by da Gama's route, had been driven so far to the west that he had come upon land nearly one thousand miles below the farthest southing of Lepe.<sup>1</sup> Bastidas and Juan de la Cosa had undertaken a fresh adventure Paria-wards. Hojeda was organizing a second expedition to seize and colonize the region of Coquibacoa, around the Gulf of Venezuela, having received the appointment of Governor thereto from their Majesties of Spain. Pinzon had under way a similar scheme for annexing the countries about the mouth of the Amazon, also by virtue of his nomination as Governor thereof. Other contracts had been executed between the Crown and individuals looking to trafficking ventures along the coasts of the southern continent, and it was obvious that so long as they shared the profits from these, Ferdinand and Isabella proposed to authorize them and to establish local "governments" without further reference to their agreements with the Admiral. If the latter delayed much longer in Spain, he would lose his prestige as mariner as well as his earlier titles and emoluments.

<sup>1</sup> We have always felt skeptical about the "accidental" nature of Cabral's discovery of Brazil. It would be almost too much for human nature for the King of Portugal to continue hearing of the Spanish exploits in the West, and not try a hazard at finding some land in that quarter for himself, on the chance that it might lie far enough towards the East to come within *his* side of the Papal demarcation.

Pinzon discovered Brazil on January 20, for Spain; Cabral on April 22, for Portugal.

The immediate preparation of his fleet was retarded by an event which constituted the most complete vindication of the Admiral's much-reviled conduct in Hispaniola. Their investigation of the rabid and multitudinous charges brought against him ended by convincing the King and Queen, that, in all the important issues, Columbus was right, and Bobadilla, Roldan, and the Court cabal wrong. To reinstate him as Viceroy formed no more a part of their policy than did the revocation of the trading and colonizing licenses granted in violation of his rights; but they saw that his administration of Hispaniola, if faulty in minor details, had resulted in the pacification of the colony, the control of the native tribes, and the establishment of a secure basis for future prosperity. They realized that the great mass of accusations laid against him was frivolous or worse, and that he had, in fact, discharged his office as Viceroy in the manner likeliest to redound to the advantage of the Crown, due regard being had for the complex difficulties surrounding him, and the unpromising material he had to use. For the injustice done him their Catholic Majesties would make him, if he and they lived long enough, just such compensation as they could persuade him to accept. Meanwhile the administration of a Bobadilla meant utter ruin to the colony, and the permanent loss of the great revenue, which, despite the denials of the Admiral's enemies, their Majesties were satisfied the island would produce. To reap the returns they anticipated, now more firmly than ever, from their new dominions, and exercise a firm control over the jarring interests sure to arise in the increasing activity of rival enterprises, Ferdinand and Isabella determined to establish a permanent government for the Indies at San Domingo, and place at its head an administrator of tried capacity, who was free from all connection with the disputes of the stormy past. For this office their choice fell upon Don Nicholas de Ovando, afterwards Grand Commander of the great military Order of Alcantara, a man eminent alike for his character and ability. Assigning to him the same rank of Judge and Governor with which Bobadilla had been invested, they avoided technically an abrogation of the



office of Viceroy conferred upon Columbus while stripping the latter of the active Governorship to which he was equally entitled. To Ovando was assigned a stately retinue of personal attendants, as well as a complete executive personnel. As if in derisive refutation of the dolorous plaints concerning the unhealthfulness and poverty of Hispaniola brought against Columbus, no less than 2500 persons,—“for the most part men of quality,” Las Casas says,—enlisted with the new Governor for service in the colony.<sup>1</sup> An armada of thirty or thirty-two vessels was requisitioned for their transportation, and the preparations for its sailing absorbed the resources and energies of the Andalusian seaports.

If the extreme popularity of the expedition was an implied endorsement of the Admiral's consistent representations as to the advantages of Hispaniola for colonization, the instructions given to Ovando yet more emphatically supported the defence made by him in answer to the attacks of his enemies. In the first place, the new Governor was to summarily depose Bobadilla, and send him to Spain by the returning fleet. The customary formal injunctions were expressed regarding the natives; they were to be well treated, and assured of the amiable intentions of the Spaniards in their respect. They were to continue, nevertheless, to pay the tribute and taxes established by the Admiral to the extent of one half of all the gold or other metals they found, and were to serve the Spaniards as before, receiving a stipend for their labor. As to the colonists themselves, all who had taken part in the revolts of Roldan and Moxica were to be sent back to Spain together with all Bobadilla's own followers. The exemption from the gold tax proclaimed by Bobadilla was revoked, and the Admiral's orders re-affirmed. Certain gifts of horses and cattle from the royal corrals made by Bobadilla were disallowed, and the property acquired by the latter during his residence on the island was confiscated. All converted Jews and Moors in the colony,—the “proselytes” of the Admiral's letter to

<sup>1</sup> Las Casas himself visited the Indies on this occasion for the first time.

Doña Juana de Torres,—were ordered to leave the island. The allotments of land made by the Admiral were to be respected, and his recommendations touching the building of certain additional fortresses, and the establishment of other towns, were adopted. The Church tithes were to be collected from settlers and Indians alike, and the dissolute life of the colonists, against which Columbus had so earnestly inveighed, was to be corrected by the dispatch of a dozen priests charged with the moral reformation of the colony. His plea for the settlement in the island of honest Spanish families was also attended to, and provision made for the emigration of married couples. In short, all that he had declared essential for the welfare of the colony was done. In one important matter only did the King and Queen differ from him: his proposals regarding the wholesale shipment of slaves to Europe was not acted upon. All natives who accepted unresistingly the Spanish régime were to be treated as the other vassals of the Crown; those who resisted were to be dealt with at the Governor's discretion. As if to purposely deprive their action of any humanitarian complexion, their Majesties suggested that the lack of laborers in Hispaniola might be profitably supplied by the importation of negro slaves from Africa. They had no objections to slavery as such, but preferred using somebody's else vassals for the purpose.<sup>1</sup>

Having thus indirectly approved the Admiral's official course, their Majesties took action upon his merely pecuniary wrongs. They gave Ovando a detailed instruction

<sup>1</sup> On the 30th of October, 1503, Queen Isabella by her personal act (Ferdinand not sharing it on account of absence) formally decreed that all "the Cannibals who should resist and refuse to receive and admit into their countries the captains and people sent by me to make such voyages, and should refuse to hear them in order to be instructed in the mysteries of our holy Catholic faith, and to remain in my service and under my dominion, may be captured and taken to the other islands and countries, and brought to these my own kingdoms and estates, or to any other places or localities which are deemed convenient or desirable, and may be sold and utilized, *the part which belongs to us being duly paid to us,*" etc.

concerning the redress due Columbus for the spoliations committed upon his personal estate by Bobadilla, and the damage inflicted by the recision of their agreements with him, so far as Hispaniola was concerned. The new Governor was to credit the Admiral with one-eighth of the net profits of all merchandise sold in the island for account of the Crown; to allow one-tenth of the income derived from all sources, after deducting his share of outlays, salaries, etc.,—the exemption granted in 1497 from his proportion of certain expenses being reaffirmed; to set apart one-tenth of the live-stock for his account; to pay to his representative the sums due from “farming out” certain offices, and from certain perquisites accruing from ship-dues, etc.; to allow him 111 hundredweight of brazil-wood annually in lieu of ten per cent upon the whole amount cut; and to permit his agent to verify the amount of gold received at the royal mint, and collect his share therefrom. Finally, the Governor was to see that punctual restitution was made of all property taken by Bobadilla from Columbus and his brothers, or that compensation was made wherever restitution was impracticable. The mere recital of these effects shows the extent of Bobadilla’s rapacity, or petty spite: clothing, household furniture and ornaments, provisions, wine, mares and their colts, money, jewels, Indian curios, books, manuscripts, maps, and,—not least,—“the stones from which the gold grows, which are partly made of gold.”<sup>1</sup> To see that his interests were hereafter more equitably guarded, Columbus was permitted to name a fiscal, or agent, and Alonzo Sanchez de Carvajal, his choice, was commanded to Ovando’s friendly attentions.

Either because he realized that, for the present at least,

<sup>1</sup> The theory held by Columbus and contemporaries concerning the origin of gold was that it *grew* from the ores containing it. He had accumulated a quantity of gold-bearing stones in which the metal was plainly visible, and laid them aside to abide the time when each fragment of rock would “grow” into solid gold, and their confiscation by Bobadilla was doubly irksome, for scientific and material reasons. The writer has had the same theory elaborately expounded to him by old miners in the more remote parts of South America, who *cached* gold-streaked rocks for the same purpose.

no further concession could be obtained from Ferdinand or Isabella, or because he was content to defer for a season the adjudication of his larger claims while he pursued his new undertaking, the Admiral accepted without protest the partial amends offered him by the Crown. There is nothing of record to indicate that the nomination of Ovando and the elaborate resources placed at his disposal wounded his susceptibilities or aroused his opposition. The Governor's commission ran only for two years; he was charged especially with the execution of the measures advocated by the Admiral; he was going to supplant Bobadilla as unceremoniously as the latter had displaced his predecessor; and was to a certain extent made the guardian of the Admiral's property and vested interests in Hispaniola. Columbus knew that this was virtually a victory and an endorsement for himself; he possessed and believed their Majesties' renewed assurances that exact justice would be finally done, and fresh honors bestowed upon him; and, without yielding a hair's-breadth of his ground, he was satisfied to let Ovando fulfil his mission, while he himself carried out his own latest project. The frequent licenses being granted for individual voyages, and the granting of executive powers to Hojeda and Pinzon on the shores of Terra Firma, more nearly concerned his privileges than did the special service entrusted to Ovando. All of his material interests in Hispaniola were now recognized and safeguarded, and the matter of his official prerogatives in that colony would be settled in due course, while both his dignities and his emoluments were assailed in the course being pursued with regard to Paria and its adjoining coasts. Being of less immediate moment, however, these infractions of his rights could await ulterior remedy. His formal protests and demands were before their Majesties, and he had received enough acknowledgment of their cogency to satisfy him of their final allowance. This we conceive to have been the true attitude of Columbus at this juncture. His correspondence, at that season, bears us out.

Ovando received his formal instructions in September; but, notwithstanding extraordinary efforts were made to

hasten his departure, five months passed before he was ready to sail. In the meantime the Admiral's exploring squadron could not be fitted out, and, apart from such assistance as he could render the new Governor in the way of counsel and information, he was measurably master of his time. There is some evidence that during the first months succeeding his return to Spain he was straitened for means, and it is apparently to this period that he referred, in writing from Jamaica the following year, when he said: "So little have twenty years of service availed me, that at this day I have not a roof to call my own in Spain. If I wish to eat or sleep, I have no place other than the public table or an inn, and, for the most part, have not enough to pay the scot." Pending the decision in his favor which was incorporated in the instructions given to Ovando, Columbus had no standing with the officials of the Castilian treasury, and they were not likely to discount the future to his advantage. Any sums of money received by him during those months must have been either in the nature of a royal largess or of loans contracted by himself. We do not think that his poverty was other than relative. It is true that he landed in Spain more than a pauper; but he had wealthy and influential friends, and the habits of the times permitted borrowing without imposing loss of personal dignity thereby. His own phrase need not imply necessarily abject want, and the only color given to the assumed existence of the latter is a letter attributed to a Venetian envoy which might easily be exaggerated from national prejudices. It is certain that with the publication of Ovando's instructions, and the acceptance of the Admiral's own plans of exploration, all cause for lack of reasonable resources would disappear, for his relations were always close with the prominent Italian merchants, of whom many were settled in Seville and Cadiz. It relieves the King and Queen of no part of their responsibility that their Admiral's necessities were probably of brief duration. That he should have been even momentarily embarrassed, is only another indication of the innate selfishness of their natures and policy. The ducats they advanced for Ovando's resplen-

dent wardrobe<sup>1</sup> would have tided Columbus over his season of distress.

The time passed rapidly enough for the waiting Admiral. He found abundant occupation in preparing his petitions and memorials; in soliciting the support of his friends; in completing the records and charts of his last discoveries; in familiarizing himself with the results of the many voyages undertaken in his two years of absence, and in maturing his plans for his approaching exploration. Among other projects he proposed the construction of a new type of vessels for his voyage; the ordinary caravels, even when rigged with lateen-sails, were not adapted to the navigation of the western seas. But in this he was discouraged by their Majesties, who urged the need of an early departure, and the length of time required to build the new ships.

One other subject absorbed much of his attention. A close student for many years of the Scriptures, and of the patristic literature based upon them, he continued the train of reflection to which he had dedicated so much time after the discovery of Paria. Doubtless the same ideas had filled his mind during the long weeks of his recent mournful voyage across the Atlantic, and to them he now wedded his earlier speculations concerning the recovery of the Holy Sepulchre. If his new voyage resulted as he hoped, a way would be opened for that enterprise, independent of all need of coöperation from the other Powers of Christendom. In a letter written in February to the Pope, he had already dwelt upon this scheme. Speaking of Hispaniola he said: "This island is Tarsis, is Cethia, is Ophir, Ophaz, and Cipango;" apparently assuming that it was the original source of all Solomon's treasure. Its future revenues, he informed His Holiness, were destined for the redemption of Jerusalem: —

<sup>1</sup> Much sympathy has been invoked for the Admiral by contrasting his humble Franciscan robe and rope girdle with the unusually elaborate outfit allowed Ovando. Had their positions been reversed, Columbus would have retained his sombre dress, for the reasons given in a previous chapter.



"This undertaking was initiated with the purpose of expending whatever it yielded in restoring the Holy Sepulchre to the Holy Church. After I went thither and examined the country, I wrote to the King and Queen my sovereigns that in seven years' time I would furnish the means for 50,000 infantry and 5000 cavalry to be employed in that conquest, and five years later would supply 50,000 infantry and 5000 cavalry more. . . . Satan has thwarted all this, and by his arts has put an end to it all, so that neither one nor the other plan can have effect, unless Our Lord should repair the damage."

He had expressed the same thought on turning back from his Cuban voyage in 1494, and it became more plausible now that he was contemplating an expedition which, if successful, would find a short cut to the Red Sea and Mecca, the seat of the infidel rule. The extraordinary vicissitudes of his career, and especially its marvellous successes, might readily have persuaded him that he was a being of superior mould as compared with his fellows; one capable of achievements immeasurably beyond their limited abilities. Instead, he was convinced that he was a mere implement in the hands of his Creator, foreordained to this peculiar work of discovery from the beginning of time. From this to a belief that his predestined service was alluded to in Holy Writ was an easy transition for one who held as firmly as did he to a divine interposition in the every-day concerns of the world, and applied the words of the Psalmist and prophets to the ordinary affairs of life. Having found no lack of verses which pointed, in his estimation, either to the unveiling of the Western World or to the recovery of Jerusalem from the paynim, he put them together and evolved a production which seemed to him to designate the recovery of the Sepulchre as an immediate corollary to the solving of Ocean's world-old mystery. The extreme urgency of prompt action was dwelt upon, and reasons adduced why the world could not last in any event beyond the year 1655. Concurring, as this theory did, with his most cherished ambition, he was impatient to lay it before his sovereigns as an irresistible appeal to their energetic piety. Beginning shortly after his release from chains, with his collection of authori-

ties and supposed prophecies, Columbus had given all the time he could spare to the elaboration of his views. But he was, to use his own words, only "an ignorant seaman, not learned in letters, a mere layman," and as such not confident of his own ability to becomingly present his evidence in so important a matter. Moreover, as the time approached for the equipment of his fleet, he found no leisure for satisfactorily completing his argument. In this dilemma he called in Fray Gaspar Gorricio; not the narrow-minded Carthusian monk some would have us believe, but a skilled and accomplished man of affairs, one of their Majesties' principal secretaries, and of sufficient note to secure the lucrative sinecure of the office of Chief Notary for Hispaniola. Fray Gaspar accepted the task of revision and amendment with readiness, and in good time returned what he terms the Admiral's "so wholesome, consoling, edifying, and inspiriting work," to which he had modestly added his own "little fragments, as one gathers together the gleanings of the vineyard, olive grove, and cornfield." In this shape it was submitted to Ferdinand and Isabella shortly before Columbus sailed.

"Most Christian and Mighty Princes," the Admiral's introductory letter began: "The reason I have for the restoration of the Holy Sepulchre to the holy Church Militant is as follows:

"From a very tender age, Most Potent Sovereigns, I began voyaging upon the sea, and therein have continued until this day. That art impels whomsoever pursues it to wish to know the mysteries of this world. More than 40 years have already passed that I have spent in the calling. All that is navigated to-day I have sailed over. I have had conversation and acquaintance with learned men both clerical and lay, with Latins and Greeks, Jews and Saracens, and with many of other sects.

"I have found Our Lord to be favorably inclined to this, my desire, and from Him have received a spirit of intelligence for its accomplishment. In sea-craft He made me skilful; of astronomy He endowed me with what was sufficient, and of arithmetic and geometry as well; and He gave me the mental ability and competent hands to portray a globe and upon it to place cities, rivers and mountains, islands and ports, each in its own proper place.

"In this time I have seen and labored to see all possible

writings of cosmography, history, chronicles, philosophy, and other sciences until Our Lord, with palpable touch, opened my understanding to see that it was practicable to sail from here to the Indies, and aroused in me the desire to undertake it. With this fire in my heart I came to your Majesties. All those who knew of my project jeeringly derided it; with them neither the sciences I have spoken of nor the authorities cited from these availed anything. In your Majesties alone remained faith and constancy. Who shall doubt that this light was not given you by the Holy Ghost, as it was to me? that He favored you with marvellous gleams of brightness from His holy and sacred Scriptures? Clear and high they spoke to me; with four-and-forty books of the Old Testament, the four Gospels and twenty-three Epistles of the Blessed Apostles, encouraging me to proceed, as they still encourage me, without a moment's cessation, to continue with all speed."

The argument — if so it can be called — then proceeds through eighty-four pages of manuscript. Since the discovery of the Western World was due to inspiration, as great heed should be paid to the suggestions of the Spirit concerning the recovery of Jerusalem. Owing to the near approach of the end of the world, and the consequent extinction of all Mohammedans, unless their Catholic Majesties undertook the crusade, countless millions of souls must be lost. Their conquest of Granada and the Indies marked them out as the instruments of the divine purpose.

"From the creation of the world, or from Adam, to the coming of Our Lord Jesus Christ, was 5343 years and 318 days, by the calculation of the King, Don Alfonso, which is considered most accurate. Adding to these 1501, — not yet finished, — the total is 6845, — not quite completed. According to this count only 155 years are lacking to the 7000 within which the world will come to an end, according to the authorities cited above."<sup>1</sup>

Such was the tone of this singular composition. It was filled with long passages from the Prophets, from the Fathers, and from the works of learned Jewish Rabbis. It closes

<sup>1</sup> This Don Alfonso was he, surnamed "the Wise," who reigned in the thirteenth century. The authorities quoted are St. Augustine and those who adopted his calculations, in particular the Cardinal Pierre d'Ailly, or Petrus Aliacus.

with a number of *glosas*, or verses elaborating certain texts, which are no worse than the average of amateur rhymes, but certainly are no better. In the original, fourteen pages are cut out, and an ancient marginal note declares that they contained the matter of greatest importance. As it stands, the work sheds a curious light upon the nature of its author, and is indispensable for a just knowledge of his character. "Maundering" and "drivelling," as his critics claim, it is not; unless we are prepared to designate by the same terms the theological and religious views held by all those from whom we ourselves may differ. Humboldt, in speaking of it, has well said that no one thinks the less of Newton because he speculated concerning the horns on Ezekiel's beast, and the illustration could be multiplied indefinitely. With his singular leaning towards mysticism, it is not strange that Columbus should have argued himself into believing what he expressed in this paper, small as was the chance of his convincing any one else. Throughout his later life his actions, even more than his words, indicate that he looked upon himself as one "devoted," and under the direct guidance of the Almighty for good or ill. If his acts were not always consistent with such a conviction, they only increase the evidence that he was mistaken.

By the opening of the year 1502, Ovando's great fleet was ready to sail. At his final audience with the sovereigns, Ferdinand delivered a long discourse upon the duties of a righteous judge and prudent governor, ending, if we may accept Herrera's report of the harangue, with the injunction to "apply with promptness the needful punishment whenever occasion demanded, lest the same should happen with him which befell the Admiral; for in such emergencies the chastisement should fall like a stroke of lightning." Considering that half the Admiral's difficulties arose from the readiness of the King and Queen to believe prejudiced charges of his excessive rigor in executing the laws, there was a grim humor in the King's closing words which could not have been wholly lost upon his hearer. The Governor set sail from San Lucar on the 13th of February, and nearly came to grief in a storm which overtook him a few days

later. His vessels were for the most part overladen and ran great risk of foundering; but after being scattered among the Canaries, and along the Barbary coast, they reunited at Gomera with the loss of a single ship, her crew, and 120 passengers. Resuming his course, he reached San Domingo on the 15th of April, and all his fleet straggled in later on without other disaster.

The departure of the larger armament left Fonseca and Bribiesca no further excuse for delaying that of Columbus. He had established himself in Seville as early as the preceding October, and begun his preparations, so that the fitting out of his squadron now proceeded rapidly. Four ships were chartered, the largest of seventy, the smallest of fifty tons burthen. Their crews numbered 141 men and boys, besides the Admiral's small personal staff. There was an unusual proportion of good material in the number, as the sequel will show. Provisions for two years were taken, and an ample stock of goods for barter with the Indians. Besides Don Bartholomew,—who was at first inclined to think he could be of greater service by remaining in Spain,—Columbus asked and obtained the royal permission to take with him his youngest son, Fernando, a boy of thirteen years. The Admiral, in addition to the letters furnished him to the Eastern princes, requested to be furnished with one or two interpreters who knew Arabic, and this was granted. His application to be allowed to touch at Hispaniola on the outward passage was, however, refused, on the ground that there was no time to lose in getting to the scene of his intended exploration. On the return voyage, their Majesties said, he might touch there for a few days, if it were necessary. An open letter given him for delivery to any Portuguese commander was based upon the probability of his meeting the ships of that nation in the distant seas of the Orient.

Their Majesties' final replies and instructions were dated in the middle of March. In answer to the Admiral's earnest entreaty that, in the event of his death while on this voyage, Ferdinand and Isabella would render to his sons and brothers that ample justice which he claimed was due

himself, the sovereigns sent him a solemn pledge—as solemn as any of its emphatic predecessors:—

“As to that part of your memorials and letters referring to yourself, your sons and your brothers, we cannot take action until we settle in some place, for we are, as you know, making a progress and you on the point of sailing, and if you were to wait for this you would lose the voyage you are about to make. Therefore it is better, since everything you require for your journey is in readiness, that you set sail at once, without any delay, and leave to your son the duty of promoting the petitions contained in your memorials. Be assured that we were deeply grieved by your imprisonment, as you saw beyond question and all know of a certainty, for as soon as we knew of it we ordered it to be undone. You know, moreover, the distinction with which we have always commanded that you should be treated, and we are now much more determined to honor and distinguish you. The rewards we have given you shall be entirely fulfilled, according to the form and tenor of our agreements, as you have seen, without anything being allowed to affect them, and you and your sons shall enjoy them as is right. If it be needful to confirm them again, we will confirm them, and we will direct that your son be placed in possession of the whole. Even in more than this we have the desire to honor and reward you, and we shall hold your sons and brothers in the consideration which is due. All this can be done if you sail at once, leaving these things in charge of your son, and so we ask that in your departure there may be no delay.”

And Columbus believed this specious rigmarole, accepted it as his sovereigns' plighted faith, and started upon his plunge into the unknown with perfect confidence in his royal patrons!—or almost perfect confidence. Don Diego, his oldest son and heir, a lad of rare intelligence, was commissioned to prosecute his father's claims in consultation with his tried friends. But to provide for possible emergencies, duplicate copies of all his agreements with the Crown, his patents of rank, and other evidences of his rights, were made out and sent by different hands to the Signory of Genoa, his native city, there to be preserved as that city's title to the portion of his estate bequeathed it in his will of February 22nd, 1498. He may not have doubted the



loyalty of the King and Queen; but for his children's sake he wished to secure the coöperation of the powerful republic in the event of any attempt on the part of the Spanish Crown to evade its obligations after his death. Others might not attach the same importance to the matter that he did, but he saw farther than they, and knew that, if his guaranteed rights were respected, his estate would be worthy even of the attention of the wealthy commonwealth of St. George.

By the middle of April the four caravels—the flagship, “Gallego,” “Santiago,” and “Vizcaina”—were ready to sail, but they did not leave Cadiz until the 11th of May.<sup>1</sup> To the spectators of their departure they were only another trading venture into the now familiar Indies, no more interesting than the four ships of Hojeda. The more recent sailing of Ovando's stately fleet had furnished a marine spectacle worth the seeing, but this affair of the “old Admiral's” was commonplace. Nine years before the bay had rung with cheers as he led his own imposing array of ships out into the then new regions; but that was too long for the populace to remember. With most of them Columbus now ranked with Hojeda, Guerra, Bastidas, and the Pinzons, and they probably looked for his return in due time with the usual lading of Indian slaves, strange weapons, screaming parrots, and ague-stricken crew. Twenty years later they hailed Magellan's lieutenant as a prodigy of skill and valor on his return from circling the globe, and he was granted the proud motto, “Thou wast the first to encompass me.” Yet on that May morning, in 1502, the “old Admiral,” little as they knew it, was setting forth equally determined to return to Spain with a rising sun. “Thou first attempted to girdle me” might as properly have been allotted to Columbus.

<sup>1</sup> Following the report of Porras, the royal comptroller on board the squadron. Las Casas says the 9th.





## XXI.

### ANTICIPATING MAGELLAN.

JUST south of the Strait of Gibraltar, on the Atlantic coast of Morocco, the Portuguese maintained a garrison in the small town of Arcila — a dreary enough post, with the sea of Sahara sands piling against its landward walls and the waves of Ocean beating against its front. Among the knights who held the fortress were certain kinsmen of Doña Felipa Moniz de Perestrello, the long-dead wife of Columbus. This may have been known to the Admiral while he was lying at San Lucar awaiting a favorable wind ; at all events, he there learned that the place was suffering from a prolonged siege by the desert tribes, and was in evil plight. Instead, therefore, of holding his course direct to the Canaries, as originally proposed, he steered south and suddenly appeared off Arcila. His object was to impress the Moors with the conviction that a relieving fleet was arriving, and thus alarm them into abandoning the siege ; but, on communicating with the shore, he found the besiegers had already raised their leaguer, and withdrawn into the interior. Don Bartholomew and the captains of the caravels paid a ceremonious visit to the wounded Governor of the place, offering him in the Admiral's name any assistance the squadron could supply, and in return for this courtesy a number of the officers, including the Admiral's connections, went aboard the vessels to thank him for his friendly intervention. This exchange of civilities ended, the Admiral hoisted sail on the same day and stood for the Canaries. His little military excursion is commonly attrib-

uted to orders received from the King and Queen, but the facts point rather to its being an independent exercise of his undoubted prerogatives as an Admiral of Castile. Portugal and Spain were at peace, and it did not consist either with his own or Don Bartholomew's disposition to lose so fair a chance of chastising the hated Moors without serious inconvenience to their own plans. If he also learned, on reaching Cadiz from Seville, that his wife's kinsmen were in the beleaguered town, there was a double reason for his action. We are surprised that his critics have overlooked this instance of the "nepotism" with which, for some occult reason, they charge him.

The squadron reached the Great Canary on the 20th, took in wood and water, and on the 26th dropped the last of the islands, Ferro, below the horizon and started on the cruise which was expected to continue around the globe. For once all the elements were propitious to Columbus, and on Thursday, the 15th of June, he dropped anchor in a harbor of Martinino, — that "island of Amazons" which he failed to find in 1492, and which we now call Martinique.<sup>1</sup> Here he remained for three days to take in wood and water, and allow the crews an opportunity to stretch their legs on land. Weighing anchor, he sailed through the glorious archipelago, along the south coast of Porto Rico, and so on to the port of San Domingo, off which he arrived on the 29th of June. Thus far his voyage had been not only the most rapid but the most featureless of the seven passages he had made across the Ocean Sea. It is even recorded by his son that the sails were not shifted between the Canaries and Man-

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Winsor does not neglect to remark that Columbus "professed to have been but twenty days between Cadiz and Martinino, but the statement seems to have been confused with his usual inaccuracy." Now the Admiral's own words are, "From Cadiz I passed to the Canaries in four days and thence to the Indies in sixteen days, where I wrote." If we allow for the detentions off Arcila and in the island, — and even modern captains count only their running time, — the Admiral's statement is probably exact. The fact that he *landed* at Martinique on the 15th does not militate against his having sighted Barbadoes or the neighboring islands two or three days earlier. "From land to land" is an honest sailor-man's count to this day.

tinino, so persistently favorable were the wind and weather. But one of his ships proved to be a sluggish sailer and a dangerous sea-boat, having so low a freeboard that any attempt to crowd on sail caused her to ship water even in fair weather. To attempt to circumnavigate the world with such a vessel would be folly, and the Admiral, calling a council of his captains and pilots,<sup>1</sup> submitted to them the query as to whether they considered the ship seaworthy. Their opinion confirming his own, he determined to apply to Ovando for another vessel, despite the royal command not to touch at Hispaniola.

In order to avoid publicity, and the possibility of a dispute with the Governor which could not fail to demoralize his men, he did not enter the harbor of San Domingo but passed on to a bay some leagues farther west. Here he anchored in the midst of a violent tempest, which sprang up at the time, and, to the Admiral's trained eye, threatened to last for several days. From this spot he despatched Pedro de Terreros, the captain of the defective craft and an old companion of the Admiral's, to the neighboring city, charged to present the squadron's plight to Ovando and request permission for it to enter the harbor of San Domingo. The Admiral offered either to exchange the vessel for a more suitable one, or to buy another outright from among the Governor's numerous fleet. He also called Ovando's attention to the signs of continued foul weather which were apparent, and explained that he feared for the safety of his squadron in the exposed haven he had temporarily selected. Doubtful of the success of his appeal, despite the reasonable grounds upon which it was based, he committed to Terreros a package of letters to their Majesties and others, which he had written after reaching Mantinino, on the chance of finding a means for transmitting them to Spain. In them he had outlined his perfected plan, which was to sail direct for Jamaica, and thence steer due west and make all progress possible while the ships were in good condition and the men disposed for the adventure. Terreros duly delivered both message and letters. Ovando's answer to the former was a flat refusal,

<sup>1</sup> Report of the comptroller Porras.

and a demand that the Admiral proceed on his course without even landing on the coast, much less coming to San Domingo. His motive was, obviously enough, to prevent any conflict between the Admiral's partisans and those of Bobadilla and Roldan. Both the latter worthies, with numbers of their adherents, had been arrested, and were then on board the vessels of the fleet which had brought out the Governor and was just on the eve of sailing again for Spain, and feeling ran so high in the city that a disturbance could hardly have been averted had Columbus appeared on the scene. There were other ways, however, in which the asked-for succor might have been rendered without endangering the peace, and the ungracious rejection of his appeal cut the Admiral to the quick. It had, moreover, the serious effect, when generally known, of undermining his authority among his own men ; for they began to ask themselves, what kind of an admiral was this who was repulsed from one of his own ports by a governor of a few months' standing? Although he felt the moral effect of Ovando's action as keenly as the material, the Admiral did not allow it to affect his sense of right. His brief detention at anchor had changed into certainty his apprehensions concerning the approach of a great storm, and he delayed his departure long enough to send a second messenger to Ovando, entreating him not to permit the fleet to leave the harbor until the weather changed, and that he was going to seek a safe shelter for his own little squadron further along the coast. To this warning neither the Governor nor his people paid heed. The fact that the former Viceroy had been denied entrance was notorious, and his presumption in forecasting the weather only resulted in the seamen and hangers-on about the town jeering him for a would-be soothsayer and prophet. The Admiral took refuge with his four vessels in the port of Hermoso, some sixty miles west of San Domingo ; the Governor's fleet stood bravely out to sea carrying Bobadilla, Roldan, the ill-starred Guarionex, the native King of the Vega Real, a large number of other prisoners, both native and Spanish, and upwards of 200,000 *castellanos* in gold — the product of the alleged

worthless mines of Bonao and Cibao. Within forty-eight hours a terrific hurricane swept over the region, which, on shore, utterly destroyed the ill-built town, and, at sea, foundered more than twenty out of the thirty or thirty-one vessels composing the homeward-bound fleet. Las Casas, who then experienced his first hurricane, aptly says, that "it seemed like nothing so much as that the whole army of devils had broken loose from hell," and the description has never been surpassed. All the Crown gold and the prisoners were lost; neither man nor boy escaping from the overwhelmed ships. The squadron of Columbus, on the other hand, although driven from its anchorage, widely scattered and subjected to imminent peril, was able to reunite after the storm, without the loss of a life. The most singular incident in this whole strange episode is, that of the handful of Ovando's ships which escaped destruction, that which bore the Admiral's property — or so much of it as Carvajal had been able to collect in the few weeks which had elapsed since Ovando's displacement of Bobadilla — was one.<sup>1</sup>

After repairing damages in Port Hermoso the Admiral laid his course for Jamaica, but was forced to put into the port of Brazil, or Jacmel as our maps call it, to ride out another gale which was brewing. Hence he sailed on the 14th of July, and, in the face of such weather, that, to use his own phrase, he had to "creep on all fours," arrived two days later at the Morant keys, off the Jamaican coast. His usual pertinacity, or rather obstinacy, in standing watch at times of peril, brought on a fresh attack of gout, which was but the prelude to the illness which crippled him during this cruise and the succeeding years of his life. After

<sup>1</sup> Doubt has been cast upon the alleged warning sent by Columbus to Ovando, on the ground that the former does not mention it. As he knew nothing of its effects until long after, and as he had other things to do than write letters at the time, this objection seems scarcely well taken. Las Casas, who was in San Domingo at the time, gives a circumstantial account, which we have followed. As to the charge that Columbus recklessly disobeyed their Majesties' orders not to touch at San Domingo, we think the facts stated above show that he did not violate their spirit, but acted with judgment and loyalty in an unexpected and dangerous emergency.



securing a scanty supply of brackish water from holes sunk in the sand,—for the ships' breakers were staved or otherwise damaged by the gales,—he put to sea and steered W.S.W. This course, he thought, would take him about midway between Cuba and the southern continent, in the direction of the supposed strait, and he maintained it for four days. During the greater part of this time the winds were light and fitful, while the strong currents were bearing him resistlessly to the south and west of Jamaica, although land was not seen. The next four days were passed in drifting so rapidly to the north and west, that on the 24th of July the squadron was actually off the group of islands lying along the southern coast of Cuba, which he had christened the Queen's Garden when he discovered them on his exploring cruise in 1494. He had, indeed, nearly reached again the extreme western limit of that cruise. Only a few leagues farther on were the island of Evangelista and that Gulf of Batabano where his crew had given their much-derided depositions to the effect that Cuba must be a part of Asia. As he now lay at anchor among the islands which had then so impeded his navigation, his thoughts were on the same problem whose solution had at that time so strongly tempted his ambition. Despite the lapse of years he was but carrying out the project he had planned among the same scenes,—to sail westward around the globe and return to Cadiz by way of the Red Sea or the Cape of Good Hope. In '94 he had found the coast of western Cuba turning toward the south, and had assumed that it was prolonged indefinitely in that quarter. Since then he had discovered Paria, and its shores had in turn been explored for 1200 miles toward the west by his imitators. Some of his pilots had secured, either in Hispaniola or in Spain, notes of the last voyage of Bastidas, wherein the coast of the southern continent was represented as turning north again beyond the Gulf of Urabá,—or, as we call it, Darien. If such were the case, the Admiral's supposed passage into the seas of the Orient would lie somewhere to the southwest of his present position: it could not lie due west, for he believed the Cuban coast, by trending southward just beyond

Evangelista Island, must close all passage in that quarter ; and it did not lie south, since the new mainland was there. Consequently, after passing three days among the Queen's Garden, he weighed anchor and steered S.S.W.

On the 30th of July land was sighted. It proved to be an inhabited island of considerable extent, and Don Bartholomew went ashore to learn what he might from the natives. They came to meet him with frankness, and differed little from the Indians of the other islands. They called their island Guanaja<sup>1</sup> and their cacique Imibe. They did not recognize either pearls or gold-dust when samples of these were shown them, and asked the Spaniards to give them the pretty trifles. Obviously, nothing was to be gained from such barbarians, and Don Bartholomew was on his way back to the ships, when his attention was arrested by two canoes coming along the shore of the island from the west. Unlike any he had before seen, one of the crafts had a neatly thatched cabin erected in its stern. It was propelled by a score of paddlers, and carried a number of women and children. On discovering the Spanish boats, the newcomers checked their headway, and allowed themselves to be captured, not without remonstrance, and taken off to the Admiral's flagship. If their boat was singular its contents were far more so, and the Spaniards hailed, with gratified surprise, the evidences of approximate civilization which met their eyes. The canoe seemed to be abroad on a trading voyage, for her cargo was extensive and varied. There were cloaks and tunics or gowns of cotton, finely worked and skilfully dyed ; embroidered waist-cloths of the same material ; copper hatchets ; knives chipped out from obsidian ; bells and cups of copper ; crucibles for melting metals ; a large number of murderous-looking two-handed swords, consisting of a heavy wooden blade edged with sharp flints ; and a store of odd-looking nuts, which the Spaniards thought were a new kind of almond, but which were, in fact, the cacao-bean.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Usually spelled Bonacca on our charts. With its neighbors Ruatan and Utila, it lies north of Truxillo on the coast of Honduras.

<sup>2</sup> The common medium of exchange, it will be remembered, in the Aztec Empire.

Men, as well as women, showed a modesty of dress and demeanor when in the presence of their captors which was entirely novel in the latter's experience. It was apparent even to the common sailors that these were people of a race far superior to those of Cuba, Hispaniola, and Paria, while to the Admiral they personified the long-sought empire of the Grand Khan. Eleven years had passed since he had first sought the Court of that potentate among the dense recesses of the Cuban forests, and with the single exception of one gown-clad figure, alleged to have been seen on his second Cuban cruise, not a garment had he seen more elaborate than the breech-clouts of Paria among the tribes of the New World. To find a people with a sense of propriety and shame, becomingly — if simply — dressed, familiar with the arts of metal-working, and possessing improved implements of war, was to him proof positive that he had at last touched the borders of the hitherto elusive Orient.

In reply to his eager interrogatories, limited as they were to the Haytian dialect and to such gestures as might be helpful, the strangers seemed genuinely anxious to give him information. As far as they were understood they apparently said they came from a country called Ciguaré, about nine days' journey to the west. Gold was plentiful in that region; the princes and nobles wore coronets and bracelets of the precious metal, and possessed chairs, tables, and coffers plated with it. Corals, pearls, and spices abounded in their favored land, and their King had ships and cannon, weapons and shields, — yes, and horses, too, — such as were described by the strange white men who were asking questions. An ocean washed the shores of Ciguaré, but not the one on which they were; and ten days beyond their country was a river called the Ganges! Such, at least, was the interpretation given by Columbus to the replies he received, and none of the disasters or disappointments subsequently encountered on this ill-starred voyage caused him to abandon this belief; rather did he find what he considered supporting evidence as he pursued his course. To him the only question calling for reflection was the direction

to be followed in reaching the gorgeous realms of which he had heard, and to assist in the search, he induced an old man among his informants to join the Spaniards as guide, or pilot. The other occupants of the canoe were dismissed, after having exchanged their native wares for Castilian gew-gaws.

From Guanaja the Admiral steered for a coast line visible some forty miles to the south, whose length and lofty summits indicated a land of greater extent. Reaching a cape, which he christened Caxinas,<sup>1</sup> he found the coast extending east and west as far as it could be traced. Which direction should he follow? His Indian guide, when pressed to show the quarter in which the gold was so abundant, pointed to the east, and enumerated the names of various provinces. The canoe which bore so significant a lading had come from the west. Upon the decision hung the failure or success of his undertaking, and in turning his bows eastward, Columbus left to Grijalva and Francisco Hernandez the glory of finding Mexico. There must have been some convincing reason which led him thus to take a direction which was that of Spain rather than of Cathay. The deciding motive is usually attributed to the Indian's indication of gold, but that is insufficient, for on none of his exploring voyages did Columbus subordinate his greater objective to the amassing of treasure; he was content to learn where such existed. Certainly on no other cruise had he before him a more seductive goal than on the present, and if he turned the stern of his ships to the setting sun it was for some commanding reason. We think this is furnished in his persistent faith in the continental character of Cuba. Searching for a passage into the eastern seas, and believing that the Cuban coast swept around indefinitely to the west and south, he would have argued that the coast on which he was now was but the extension of the northern continent. To proceed westward would only entail ultimately a return to the already twice followed track along the southern shores of Cuba. In that direction there could be no access to the East by water. By following the new coast eastward, on the contrary, he would

<sup>1</sup> The modern Cape Honduras.

doubtless find the passage which led to Ciguaré, Cathay, and the Ganges, at some point between his present position and the limit of Bastidas' cruise along the coasts of Terra Firma. Las Casas intimates as much, when he says that Columbus hoped to find the passage in about the latitude of what we know as the Chagres River. But we have yet more convincing proof that the Admiral's object in steering east was not to find gold, but finally to reach the strait which should take him westward again into the seas which washed Cathay.

When, in 1517, Francisco Hernandez de Cordova sailed for Cuba on a slaving expedition to the Guanajas and Honduras, he was persuaded by his pilot, Anton de Alaminos, to sail westward instead, on the certainty of finding lands of surpassing wealth. Fifteen years before, the shrewd mariner had been a common sailor aboard the Admiral's flagship on the cruise we are now describing. He had observed that his commander acted on information of the existence of regions of vast importance in the West and guided himself accordingly, but was compelled ultimately by the loss of some of his ships to abandon the search. Alaminos, however, had closely observed all that occurred, and when the Admiral turned back without finding the strait, his watchful sailor knew that the anxiously sought western passage must lie north of Honduras, if it existed at all. He and Francisco Hernandez did not find it in 1517, but they did find Cozumel and Yucatan to such good purpose that, in 1519, the same pilot undertook to guide Hernan Cortez upon his voyage of conquest. Thus, ultimately, was the discovery and downfall of the Aztec Empire associated with the "old Admiral's" decision to turn eastward from Caxinas Point. The grandeur of his aims, and the information under which he acted, survived the wreck of his own attempt. By pursuing the direction which he abandoned, and profiting by his negative experience, one of his seamen was able to unveil the empire whose vaguely described marvels had so deeply impressed the great navigator with the proximity of the Asiatic courts.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Prof. Fiske suggests that the Admiral was guided in his choice of direction by Pedro de Ledesma, one of his pilots, who had been with

Having determined to follow the coast to the eastward, the Admiral found his progress barred by a succession of violent storms from that quarter which compelled the squadron to remain under the shelter of the point for several days. A landing was made to permit the priest to hold Mass, and the Spaniards were received by the natives with fearless frankness. On the occasion of Don Bartholomew's taking formal possession of the country a day or two later, at the river he called the River of Possession and we the Black River, the Indians appeared with abundant supplies of food and fruits which they pressed upon their visitors, who in turn distributed bells, needles, and looking-glasses. The natives called their country Maia, and although many of them were adorned no otherwise than as nature made them, plus a coating of charcoal or paint, others wore colored gowns or caps. This raiment, scanty as it was, coupled with the fact that "lions" and other large quadrupeds were said to haunt the forests, tended to confirm the Admiral's confidence that he was on the right road to reach the kingdoms of the East, and increased his impatience to continue his journey. But the elements were incessantly opposed to him, and he had to fight his way in the teeth of almost continuous gales and a strong adverse current. For days at a time the average progress would amount only to a few miles, despite a constant tacking off and on shore while daylight lasted. On some days, he says, he could only make a single mile, and the current ran so strong that his lead could not reach the bottom. At night the squadron came to anchor as best it could, for the coast was not one to encourage rashness. On the 12th of September the arduous struggles came to an end for the time being, for the eastward trend of the coast terminated abruptly in a long

Pinzon, Solis, and Vespucci on the assumed voyage of 1497 to Yucatan, Mexico, and Florida, and who was therefore necessarily aware that no strait existed to the north and west of Honduras. But both Pinzon and Ledesma swore, in 1513, in the great cause of Columbus *vs.* the Crown, that their Yucatan-Florida voyage was made *after* the Admiral's discovery of Veragua and search for the strait. (*Navarette*, Vol. III., p. 558, *pregunta* 10.) We make this mention in no spirit of captiousness.



narrow cape, beyond which the land seemed to run due south. The change of direction, which was accomplished only after a long and stormy contest, brought with it improved weather, and the Admiral gave the name of *Gracias á Dios* to the cape in thanksgiving for the relief from the distressing experiences of the last few weeks. In truth, the exploration had opened in a manner little calculated to encourage the superstitious sailors or their commander. Since leaving Caxinas, if not since leaving the Keys of Jamaica, neither sun nor stars had been visible.<sup>1</sup>

"My vessels were yawning open," he writes, "their sails in rags; anchors, rigging, cables, boats, and much provision lost; the ships' companies enfeebled; all repenting of their sins and many promising to be religious; not a man without some vow or promised pilgrimage. On frequent occasions they even confessed their sins to one another. Other tempests there have been, but none which lasted so long or caused such fear. Time and time again those we considered courageous lost all heart. Grief for the son whom I had brought with me tormented my soul; all the more because at the tender age of 13 he was called upon to support such prolonged hardships. Our Lord gave him such strength that he revived the spirits of the others, comforted me, and shared the work as though he had been at sea for eighty years. I had fallen ill and was at death's door several times. From a little cabin which I caused to be built on deck I directed the ships' movements. My brother was in the worst and most dangerous vessel. Great was my regret on his account, for I had brought him against his will; but such has been my fortune that the 20 years of service which I have passed with such constant toil and peril have profited me so little that I have not to-day in Spain a roof of my own."

From this point, pursuing a southerly course, the Admiral found the winds and currents favoring him for several days. At the mouth of a river, which he baptized "*the Disaster*," he lost one of his boats with its crew, who were attempting to cross the bar in search of firewood; but in comparison with the dangers to which all hands had been so long ex-

<sup>1</sup> "For 88 days the terrible storm did not leave me," is the Admiral's comment, but there is an evident error in transcription or of memory. His report was not written until July, 1503, and he was then in extreme misery and distress.

posed, the smaller catastrophe made little impression. The region about Gracias á Dios was flat and uninteresting, and the few natives seen were in keeping with their surroundings. As the squadron proceeded south, however, both the country and its inhabitants improved in appearance. By the 17th of the month a point was reached where the coast presented the aspect of a veritable park; the shore was covered with forests of exquisite beauty, a broad river poured its waters into the sea between banks of vine-hung trees, a wide beach of dazzling sand ran to the forest's edge, while a chain of rugged cloud-capped mountains, rising some distance in the interior, furnished an imposing background. Fronting the river's mouth was a verdant island affording a safe and inviting anchorage, while a large village on the mainland seemed to be peopled with natives of a better class than those seen since the arrival at Port Caxinas. Here the Admiral determined to remain for some days to allow his men a little liberty after their arduous voyage, and to make such repairs about his ships and their rigging as the stormy passage had made necessary. The Indians at first resented the intrusion of the strangers, gathering in force upon the beach near their town, and exhibiting a formidable array of bows, lances, and great wooden swords; but seeing that no harm was intended, they soon swam out to the vessels and indicated a desire to be friendly. They had nothing to barter except their bright-hued cotton gowns and a few ornaments of guanin, or base gold, and these the Admiral declined to receive, in the belief that such indifference would lead them to produce their more valuable possessions. He caused his visitors to be well treated and enriched with Spanish trinkets, and was much surprised when his men, on landing for the first time, found the gifts all neatly tied up and lying on the beach, as if in intimation that the natives on reaching home had decided not to accept anything except in the way of fair trade. To propitiate the Spaniards, they even went so far as to send down to the boats a couple of not unduly bashful maidens, in charge of an elderly chief who bore a flag fixed on a lance for all the world like a Christian messenger. The prompt return from the ships of the young

women, decked out in Castilian garments by the Admiral's orders, served to establish confidence between the Indians and the Spaniards, and opened the way for frank communication. Don Bartholomew made several visits to their settlement during the succeeding days and was received with much honor. He found the natives to possess keen curiosity coupled with much intelligence. Their chiefs and principal men answered his inquiries with apparent readiness, and only showed apprehension when the notary accompanying Don Bartholomew drew out his writing materials and began to take notes of their replies. At this they fled in confusion, and when they were finally induced to return took care to burn certain fragrant powders and blow the smoke towards the Christians before joining them again. Evidently they looked upon the worthy Diego Mendez and his ink-marks as allied with the Evil One. They called their own district Cariatí, or Cariay; the island fronting it, Quiriviri.<sup>1</sup> Their gold came from mines in the interior; there was much also in the country of Carambarú, or Azabaro, which adjoined their own to the south. Their houses were well built, and in many of them the mummied corpses of defunct relatives were preserved, surrounded by the articles they had most highly prized. A certain amount of skill in wood-carving was exhibited in these houses, and the people were, generally speaking, somewhat more advanced in their mode of life than those of Hayti and the other islands. When, after several days of intercourse between the ships and the shore, the Admiral ordered two of their most intelligent men to be brought off to the flagship, to serve as guides to the coast of Carambarú, there was a great lamentation. Four chiefs came aboard to beg for the release of their fellow-tribesmen, and although loaded with presents and assured that the men should be restored in a few days, they declined to be consoled. In particular did they resent the Admiral's refusal to exchange them for two wild-hogs, or peccaries, which the

<sup>1</sup> The modern Bluefields is supposed to correspond to the Cariay of Columbus by some geographers, while others believe it to be Graytown in Nicaragua. The former site seems more closely to answer the description given of Cariay and its adjacent island.

chiefs had liberally provided as an offset. Apparently they thought that the Christians had seized the men as an addition to their larder, and considered the pigs as a fair equivalent. The guides themselves do not seem to have shared their friends' apprehension as to their fate, for we find them later on aiding the Spaniards efficiently in persuading the natives that scraps of looking-glass were more valuable than ornaments of massive gold.

On October 5th the Admiral left his anchorage off Cariay and stood southward in quest of Carambarú.<sup>1</sup> What he gathered, or inferred, from the Indians of the former district concerning the latter had excited a lively expectation in his mind, for the name had already been repeated as a place abounding in gold by the Indians taken on board at Guanaja. To Columbus there seemed to be reasons why the inland gold mines mentioned by the people of Cariay must be in the Asiatic province of Ciamba, a part of the gorgeous Orient he was seeking. One of the sailors had killed an enormous monkey in the woods while the ships were last lying at anchor, and the beast recalled to the Admiral some of the accounts given by Marco Polo of such monsters in the great eastern islands. At many places along shore huge "crocodiles" were basking, — another suggestion of the Nile and Ganges. Moreover, the shores of the ocean were in many places covered with dense shrubbery down to the water's edge; the bushes fantastically standing on long stilt-like roots, so interlaced that they seemed to belong to a single bush of vast extent; and such growths were described by Pliny as usual to the quiet waters of the Persian Gulf. These and similar observations lent color to the conceptions engendered by the meeting with the trading canoes at Guanaja, and inspired the Admiral with fresh hopes. If his inferences were well founded, he should find the strait ere long, and through it reach the provinces which lay behind Cariay and the coast regions he was skirting.

<sup>1</sup> The Caravaró of Las Casas; Zerabora of Fernando Columbus; Cerabaró of Porras and Peter Martyr, and Azabaro of Pedro de Ledesma. This one example will suffice to show the latitude enjoyed by the contemporary chroniclers in the matter of geographical names. The list of variations might be still further extended.

A single day's sail brought the squadron to a group of islands guarding the entrance to a great bay. This, according to the guides, was the region Carambarú,<sup>1</sup> and the vessels passed into the quiet lagoon and dropped anchor. The ships' boats visited the islands, secured a few golden ornaments by barter, and returned with the report that a little further along yet greater riches would be found. Accordingly, on the same day, the vessels got under way, threading channels so narrow that oftentimes the spars and rigging were swept by overhanging trees, and rounded a point beyond which the land-locked waters expanded into an immense lake, studded with highly cultivated and well-peopled islets. This gulf was called Aburena by the Indian guides, although it practically formed with Carambarú Bay the great connecting lagoon which we call by the name of Chiriqui. Here the Admiral spent several days, confined to his bed, but listening with eager interest to the reports brought him by Don Bartholomew and the other captains who explored all parts of the beautiful sound and the adjacent mainland. They found the natives supplied with golden trinkets in greater profusion than they had before seen. Almost every adult wore the grotesque figure of some beast or bird, or a heavy medal, hanging from his neck, while necklaces, armlets, and coronets were equally plentiful. Under the guileless urging of the Cariay guides, the Indians of Carambarú and Aburena jostled one another in their anxiety to exchange their vulgar baubles for the rare treasures of Castile, and in the competition, ornaments weighing a quarter of a pound and even more of solid gold were bartered for a few needles or two or three little hawk-bells. At one spot,—so Pedro de Ledesma, one of the Admiral's pilots, affirms,—eighty canoes were gathered about the ships at one time, their occupants bent upon securing a share of the wonderful objects offered by the white men. So little store did they set by the yellow stuff that they did not hesitate to tell the strangers that it could be had in still greater abundance by simply continuing on along the coast. In this the Cariay guides concurred, intimating that although their own tribe

<sup>1</sup> The "Admiral's Bay" of modern maps.

drew its supply of jewelry from these two lagoons, they were aware that the metal was found more plentifully a little more to the eastward, and they named half a dozen localities where, they said, the Spaniards should go. Among the uncouth sounds which represented these several goals two were more distinctly caught than the others, Veragua and Cobija. The former seemed to be considered the district of chief importance on the whole coast, and the latter to be the end either of navigation or of the gold — which, was not plain.

Under this incentive the Admiral resumed his voyage, taking with him two of the Aburenians as additional guides. Passing out of the lagoons into the open sea, he found the coast-line, which had been running uniformly south since he left Cape Gracias á Dios, now trended due east, and the country inland seemed increasingly rough and mountainous. The winds and currents were more adverse than before, twenty-five miles was considered a good day's progress, and the rains fell without intermission. Notwithstanding these drawbacks, the squadron forged along, the boats being sent to examine every river-mouth and trade with every village, with a result on the whole encouraging. The seamen had become infected with the trader's spirit, and felt aggrieved when a native settlement failed to yield its dozen or score of golden pieces. As a rule, the Indians showed a readiness to receive the white men; at only one place, a river near Aburena, did they offer resistance, and then, although well armed with savage weapons, they contented themselves with beating drums, sounding conch-shells, spitting and splashing the sea-water towards the intruders. A cannon-shot over their heads, and a bolt sent from a cross-bow through the arm of one of the most aggressive of their number, put an end to this mild exhibition of independence. Duraba, Cativa, Hurirá, Cobrava, — these are some of the names given by the inhabitants to their hamlets, streams, or districts lying eastward from the great lagoon. The Spaniards were, in fact, creeping laboriously along the jungle-bordered shore which stretches from Chiriqui along the Isthmus of Panama. At the mouth of



the Veragua River, or in its vicinity, they obtained, according to Pedro de Ledesma, ninety marks — upwards of forty pounds' weight — of gold in exchange for three dozen little copper bells. A few leagues beyond, they reached the country called Cobija, and here the four native guides proclaimed that the gold ended ; beyond was nothing to be had worth the taking. The appearance of the people, who differed little from those of Paria, bore out the assertion, for golden ornaments were as rare among them as they had been common farther up the coast. Before continuing his search for the strait, the Admiral proposed to send Don Bartholomew into the interior of the Veragua country, whence, the guides declared, came all the gold which had been seen along the coast ; but the evening before this expedition was to land so violent a gale arose that he was forced to stand out to sea for security. As soon as he dared approach land, he fought his way along-shore in search of a harbor. About thirty miles beyond the Chagres<sup>1</sup> he found an ideal haven, protected against the easterly gales by a cape and several small islands. Anchoring here, he was forced to wait ten days before daring to leave port, during which time the gales and torrential rains continued unceasingly. The beauty of the harbor, with its orderly Indian village nestling among the forests and clearings, was such that even the gloomy weather could not destroy its charm, and he christened it Puerto Bello, — a name made famous in succeeding years through the exploits of the Buccaneers. The persistence of violent storms, and the doubtful safety of turning from his main object during their continuance, soon led the Admiral to abandon his intended investigation of the mines of Veragua. "I looked upon them as already secured," are his own words ; as in the case of Cuba, Jamaica, and Paria, having made the main discovery, he would leave to others the exploration of their secrets. So when, on the 9th of November, the storm moderated, he weighed anchor, and again attempted to run to the eastward. After making thirty miles of perilous navigation, he abandoned the attempt and turned back to a port some fifteen miles farther east than

<sup>1</sup> Called Rio de los Lagartos — Alligator River — by the Admiral.

his last anchorage. The general cultivation of the islands and coast about this new harbor suggested the name of Bastimentos, — provisions, — and so the Admiral called it ; but we know it better as *Nombre de Dios*, the famous point of departure for the homeward bound treasure galleons of the Spanish kings. For two weeks the now battered squadron lay weather-bound. At the end of that time, although the storms had not entirely ceased, the ships again essayed to make head against the combined strength of the winds and currents. This time sixty miles of coast were painfully passed, and the ships had nearly reached the modern Cape San Blas<sup>1</sup> when the forces against which they were struggling gained the mastery, and literally drove them back. Running for Bastimentos, the Admiral hove to off a narrow inlet under the lee of San Blas where there was promise of nearer shelter. Soundings showed a safe, if intricate, entrance, and here the ships were, with difficulty, brought to anchor in the diminutive basin. From its cramped dimensions the Admiral called the spot *El Retrete*, — the Cabinet, — but our charts designate it as *Escribanos*. The neighborhood was thickly populated by a tribe of Indians who resented the freedom of the Spanish sailors, and some preliminary skirmishes led to the use, in self-defence, of the white men's fire-arms. It was the first time on this voyage that the Admiral had permitted the use of force. Although he had touched at more villages than on any other of his voyages, except the first, so far not a native had been harmed except the man wounded near Aburena by a sailor acting without orders. But at this anchorage of *El Retrete* the vessels lay so close to the bank that the Indians could have set them on fire without serious trouble, and as soon as the savages showed hostility, — whether justified or not, — it was imperatively necessary that they should be held at arm's length. The situation of the Spaniards was becom-

<sup>1</sup> Called by the Admiral, Cape Marmol, or Marble, from a stuccoed house or temple visible from the ships. As the only stone edifice thus far seen in the Indies, he attached much importance to it, going so far as to obtain a fragment of its material to substantiate his statements regarding it.

ing sufficiently grave without running the risk of losing their ships in port.

For fifteen days the Admiral remained in wearisome idleness, "for so the cruel weather demanded," as he says. Himself, the ships, and all on board were "thoroughly worn out." Discouraged by the fatal loss of time to which he was subjected, persuaded that it was useless to hope for more favorable weather for an indefinite time, his active temperament would not support the enforced restraint of his present situation. He had "thought to have finished with it [the stormy season] and found himself but beginning." "In order to do something, until the weather should permit me to put out to sea and continue my voyage," he says, "I reconsidered my decision not to return to the mines." Since the continuous gales from east and north-east barred his passage in the direction he wished to take, he should use them to carry him back to Veragua and spend his time in exploring that region, rather than do nothing. On the 5th of December, therefore, he set out from the Cabinet and steered west, counting on his former adversaries of the air and sea to serve his altered purpose. For a paltry fifteen miles they favored him, and then, with the fickleness which has made them rivals in inconstancy, the wind veered to the west and fell upon him with pitiless fury. It is no small matter when the foremost seaman of his time declares that he then experienced the most terrible tempest of a long life passed at sea, and his report of it is not so long as to be wearisome.

"For nine days I wandered as one lost," he writes, "without hope of salvation. Never have eyes seen the sea so high and ugly, or so much foam. The wind was not available for making headway, and did not permit us to run for any shelter. There I was, held in that sea turned into blood and seething like a cauldron upon a huge fire. So awesome a sky was never seen; for a day and a night it blazed like a furnace, vomiting forth sheets and bolts of lightning until, after each one, I looked to see whether it had not carried away my masts and sails. With such frightful fury they fell upon us that we all believed the ships would founder. During the whole time the water never ceased falling from the skies; not in what would be called rain,

but rather as though another Deluge were upon us. My people were already so worn out that they courted death, to be free from such continued martyrdom. The ships, for the second time, lost boats, anchors, cables, and sails, and were leaking. When it was our Lord's pleasure I sought Puerto Gordo,<sup>1</sup> and there repaired as well as I could."

The situation of the squadron was, in simple truth, desperate. The men were broken down by the perpetual struggle for their lives, poisoned by the fevers common to those unhealthy shores in the wet season, and disheartened by the Admiral's apparent determination to turn his back on the golden coasts just skirted, and, at the first opportunity, resume the wearisome search for a strait which, when found, would only lead them into new perils. Under the influence of constant dampness and heat the provisions had spoiled, so that those among the crews who were not blessed with strong stomachs ground their biscuit into a paste with water, baked it and swallowed the mess at night to avoid seeing their food. Others, of stouter nerves, ate their rations as they came, "for to pick out the worms would be to lose the supper," as is pithily explained. All hands were glad to eat the meat of the huge sharks which abounded in those seas, and had at first been regarded with terror and loathing. The ships themselves were racked by the storms, and began to be riddled by the teredo from their protracted sojourns in landlocked harbors. Finally, the unprecedented violence and persistence of furious gales and head currents caused the stoutest hearts to lose courage. It was contrary to all experience, even to those who had been most in the new western seas. A month had been passed in making the 300 miles from Caxinas to Gracias á Dios. Ten weeks had been needed to cover the 700 miles from the latter to the Cabinet, near Cape San Blas. Small wonder that the seamen should ascribe such unheard-of perils to the machi-

<sup>1</sup> The other accounts say this was the Porto Bello already visited, but Ferdinand Columbus distinguishes it as Huiva, says it was a long and narrow inlet, and that the natives there *lived in huts built in the trees*. The latter remark is significant when compared with Vespucci's story of his first voyage.

nations of the Evil One. To them all the last day seemed to have come, when, during the gale described by the Admiral, the ships found themselves, on the 13th of December, in a devil's dance of waterspouts, any one of which would have swept their little barks off the ocean as a broom sweeps chips. With one voice the affrighted sailors joined their commander in reciting the Gospel of St. John — that sovereign remedy against the arts of Beelzebub at sea — and when, at the sound of its opening verses, the huge pillars of whirling water drew into the lowering clouds above and the frothing seas below, they knew that the hand of Satan was in all they had suffered.<sup>1</sup>

At the first indication of fair weather, on the 20th of December, the squadron put to sea and headed up the coast for Veragua. Wind and current, which for ninety days had been favorable for this course, now opposed it. The almanac marked an approaching opposition of Saturn, and the Admiral put back into Porto Bello to await it. "I did not dare to encounter it," he declares, "in so wild a sea upon a dangerous coast, for it generally brings a gale or stormy weather. This was on Christmas Day, at mass-time. I returned again to the place from which I had come with so much toil; and, after the New Year was past, turned once more to the struggle, — for such it was, although I now had fair weather for my voyage, — since my vessels were unseaworthy and the people sick and dying." This time the squadron attained the shores of Veragua, coming to anchor on Epiphany, the 6th of January, 1503, at the mouth of the river Yebra, a few miles east of Veragua River. From the event which the day commemorated, the Admiral called his new refuge Belen, or Bethlehem, and here he decided to remain while he investigated the "secrets" of the land which was reputed to contain such wealth of gold. He looked on his arrival as providential. "Our Lord guided me to a river with a safe harbor," he writes, "albeit there were but ten palms [eighty inches] of water in the channel. I entered with difficulty,

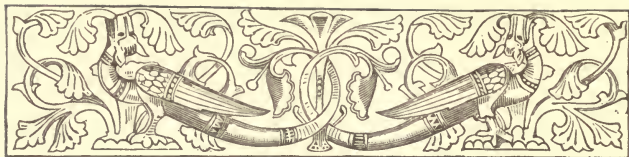
<sup>1</sup> Ferdinand Columbus adds that his father made the sign of the cross and drew an imaginary circle in the air with his sword.

and the next day the tempest again arose. Had I been outside, I could not have got in by reason of the bar."

Just ten years before, at the same holiday season, he had found himself, a shipwrecked outcast, dependent upon the generosity of King Guacanagari for the lives of himself and his men. Before he saw the last of Belen the early scenes at Navidad were destined to be reproduced with striking similarity.







## XXII.

### AN INACCESSIBLE OCEAN.

COLUMBUS had not yet abandoned his project of finding a passage into the eastern seas ; his return to Veragua was partly a concession to the grumbling wishes of his exhausted men and partly a plan to spend the stormy season in gathering information concerning the wealthiest region it had yet been his fortune to discover. The condition of his ships, bad as it was, was not beyond repair ; a few weeks of active work in port would make them seaworthy and recuperate his men ; native provisions could be secured in abundance for future operations, and, despite its ominous beginning, the voyage carried to a successful end. With every respite from the harassing cares of navigation, his mind instinctively turned to the problem of the strait, and he pieced together each scrap of what seemed to him evidence of its existence, until he was firmly persuaded, that, whether he reached it or not, a way was open by sea to the lands of spice and ivory. So far as he had yet seen, this region of Veragua was the centre of riches and intelligence for the whole coast along which he had passed. It was so regarded by the tribes both to the north and to the east. Half-understood hints had been given by his native informants of strange peoples and products in the interior, as well as of treasure passing belief, and he hoped that a march inland would reveal, at least, some of these "secrets." As he gazed at the towering mountain ranges which showed their summits far in the interior during the latter half of his course, he dreamed of Zayton and Cathay, of Ciamba and

Farther India. "The people of whom Pope Pius the Second wrote," he concluded, "have been found, judging by the country and its indications; but not the horses with their trappings and curbs of gold. This is not surprising, for they are not needed in these lands along the seashore, where only fisher-folk dwell." As yet he had not formulated a formal conception of the geography of the country before him; it was merely some unlocated border-land of the mysterious Orient, as Cuba, Hayti, and Paria had each been in turn.

He did not purpose devoting a great deal of time to the investigation of Veragua; important as it was in comparison with adjoining territories, he had little hope of reaching the seats of eastern civilization by an overland journey. The only true route was by sea, through the strait. In order, therefore, to hasten the work of exploration, he sent his brother with a party to visit the King or Quebi<sup>1</sup> of the district, who, he learned, lived in a village on the neighboring river of Veragua, some distance from its mouth. Don Bartholomew went around by sea, in the ships' boats, to that stream, and was met by the King at its entrance with much apparent cordiality. After an exchange of gifts, in which the Spaniards lost nothing, savages and white men went their separate homeward ways. The next day the King visited the Spanish ships lying in the Belen, and passed an hour in not particularly edifying intercourse. To all appearances the best of relations were now established between the natives and their visitors. The inhabitants of the surrounding country flocked to the anchorage to verify the marvels which they had heard concerning the newcomers, and a steady traffic arose with fish, provisions, and golden ornaments on the one side, and needles, broken looking-glass, and bells on the other as the staples of trade. But Belen was not Veragua, and all accounts united in maintaining that the source of gold was to be found among the mountains of the latter region. When his ships and men

<sup>1</sup> Irving and others use this as the chief's name. Peter Martyr quotes the Admiral himself as saying that *Quebi* and *Tibi* were native titles equal to the *cacique* of the Hispaniola tribes.

were in somewhat better condition than at the time of their arrival, the Admiral prepared to move his squadron nearer to the much-discussed district. A sudden rise in the river on the night of the 24th of January, caused by some cloud-burst up country, parted the cables of his flagship, drove her so violently against one of the smaller ships that the latter lost a mast, and sent them both whirling down stream until they brought up, sadly the worse for the experience, against a friendly bank. More serious even than the effect on the vessels was that upon the bar at the river's mouth. Here, between the sand brought down by the swollen stream and that thrown up by the sea, the channel was so shallowed that any egress for the squadron was impracticable for the time being. There was nothing to do but again repair damages and wait for a new channel to form.

Such of my readers whose fortune it has been to lie fever-stricken in the stuffy cabin of a small vessel, at anchor in some mangrove-fringed, swamp-surrounded tropical bay during the rainy season, with imperious duty calling elsewhere and an immovable obstacle chaining them in their rain-sodden situation, may be able to picture the Admiral's plight. We doubt if others can. Helpless himself, he sent Don Bartholomew to make another and more thorough exploration of the neighboring interior. Setting out on the 6th of February, nothing daunted by the torrential rains which have since given the Isthmus such a melancholy fame, the stalwart Adelantado went around by sea to the Veragua River and rowed up it to the King's village. Here he was hospitably received, and on announcing his purpose was furnished with three guides, who, the King was understood to say, would show him the principal mines. For two days the party followed the course of the stream towards its source in the mountains. Few of the Spaniards were likely ever to forget that first ascent of the mountains of Costa Rica. A hint of their experience is given in the statement that they crossed the river forty-three times ; but the struggle with the vine-tangled, thorny jungle, the blind stumbling over slippery roots and rotten trunks, the wading through marshes and dank, fern-grown bogs — all these are passed

over in silence, although together they more than doubled the distance. On the third day the column reached a summit, whence an extended prospect was afforded as far as the sight could reach. All that territory was full of mines, the guides proclaimed ; at the end of twenty days' journey toward the west the traveller would still be among them. The names of many villages and districts renowned for their riches were given, and to prove the productiveness of the earth, the Indians showed the Spaniards how the gold could be found among the roots of the very trees under which they stood. The mere hint was enough, and for four hours the eager sailors dug up the soft forest mould, and washed the soil beneath it in the adjoining stream, until every man had his little store of shining grains. At the end of that time Don Bartholomew started homeward, more than content with his investigations. There would be no lack of witnesses as to the wealth of Veragua. The fact, subsequently learned, that the wily chief had ordered his guides to lead the white men beyond his own borders, and show them the mines of a rival with whom he preferred they should deal, did not affect the main question. The whole country was full of the metal.

His brother's report, and the enthusiastic affirmations of the men accompanying him, persuaded the Admiral that regions of such fabulous wealth ought to be held for the Crown without further ceremony, and he began to revolve in his mind the advisability of establishing a garrison at a convenient point to continue explorations and assert the dominion of Castile. Whether this idea was the fruit of some direct suggestion made by his brother and his other lieutenants, or was due to his doubts as to the possibility of extricating his ships from their imprisonment, or, finally, was but an application of a predetermined policy to leave a colony at any place of supreme importance which he might discover, does not appear. It is evident that, knowing the disposition of King Ferdinand, he counted upon the tidings of such a brilliant annexation condoning for any failure which might ultimately attend the chief object of his voyage. With a view to resolving the practicability of the plan, he once more sent Don Bartholomew upon a reconnois-

sance which had for its particular object the investigation of the country beyond Veragua, and its relative desirability as the site for a colony in comparison with the latter and Belen. Taking with him fifty-nine men, and sending a boat with fourteen more along the coast, Don Bartholomew marched along the seashore to Hurirá, twenty or twenty-five miles beyond Veragua. On approaching the chief town of the district he was met by the King and people, who welcomed the Spaniards with hearty hospitality. During the day the chief of the adjoining region of Dururi appeared with a number of his tribe, anxious to exchange their gold for the white men's trinkets. From all the Indians the same tale was heard; gold was everywhere to be had; but it was found in the greatest plenty in the mines of this, that, or the other "King" somewhere in the interior. One variation there was, that in a certain territory the warriors were armed like the Spaniards; but what wandering story, drifting canoe-borne from distant Cuba or Hispaniola, this might have for its basis, Don Bartholomew did not trouble himself to inquire. Encouraged by the friendliness of his hosts, and the obvious abundance of the desired metal, he decided to penetrate still farther inland. Dismissing one-half of his men to return overland to the ships, he continued his journey with the remainder. At a settlement called Cobrava by the natives he found less gold, but vast plantations of maize extending for several miles.<sup>1</sup> From here he passed to Catiba, where he obtained a goodly quantity of gold in barter, and so, rejoining his boat, returned to the Admiral.

Don Bartholomew's report was that there was no harbor along the coast which offered greater advantage than that of Belen, and orders were accordingly given to make preparations for a permanent settlement on an elevation near the river's mouth. A storehouse was first built, in which were deposited the artillery and ammunition, provisions, ship-stores, and trading goods destined for the use and protec-

<sup>1</sup> Ferdinand Columbus says that cornfields extended for 6 leagues (24 miles). Either he is misrepresented or his uncle was a poor judge of distances by land.

tion of the garrison. Around this central edifice eight cabins were erected for the accommodation of the men. Don Bartholomew was appointed to command the colony and 80 men—more than one-half of the Admiral's entire force—were detailed to remain with him. His own vessel was also to be left in the harbor, to serve in future explorations along the coast, or for an asylum in emergency, and on this, for greater security, the more perishable stores, such as wine, oil, vinegar, cheese, and the like were carried. Throughout the whole period of construction the Indians were observing the labors of the white men with a close attention which aroused the latter's suspicion. To propitiate their friendship the Admiral distributed gifts with liberality, and especially gave their King many presents of the sort most highly prized by savages. All these were accepted in seeming good part, but there was an undercurrent of dissatisfaction visible in all their actions. Large numbers of canoes were seen passing by the mouth of the river, going always in the direction of Veragua, and although the natives explained that these were on their way to join the Indians of that region in an expedition against the King of Cobrava, the Spaniards felt that the movement was more likely to be directed against themselves. To solve the doubt Diego Mendez, the squadron's notary, volunteered to take a boat and follow some of the canoes until their destination was discovered. He soon returned to report that he had come upon a large force of well-equipped warriors, numbering a thousand or more, gathered on the seashore between the two rivers, who, in answer to his frank offer to join them with his own comrades in fighting the Cobravans, showed such unwillingness, that he was convinced that their real objective was the Spanish squadron and the village at Belen. This alarming intelligence was not wholly credited by the Admiral, and to allay all doubt Mendez undertook, with a single companion—Rodrigo de Escobar, a seaman from Don Bartholomew's ship—to make a more extended scout. Following the beach on foot, the two men reached the mouth of the Veragua without adventure; but there they encountered two canoes with Indians of some other tribe, who warned them



that in two days the Veraguans and their allies intended to fall upon the Spaniards and destroy their ships and houses. Mendez tried to bribe these men to carry him up the river to the King's town, that he might investigate for himself, and after much persuasion they yielded, protesting, however, that the whole party would be killed on sight. On reaching the town Mendez pretended to be a surgeon, come to heal a wound in the King's leg from which he was known to be suffering. Under the influence of a handful of bells and needles, he was guided to the camp, which was situated on a hill-top some distance away. Here he found the King occupying a hut on one side of an open square or place, around which were disposed the heads of 300 of the enemies killed in battle by his warriors. Not a whit disconcerted, Mendez pushed his way to the door of the King's lodging, where he was met by the latter's son, and thrust violently away with many threats of worse treatment in store. Even the exhibition of a pot of ointment and the repetition of the fiction about the wounded leg failed to make any impression; but when Mendez calmly seated himself, drew a comb, scissors, and looking-glass from his pocket, and directed Escobar to trim and dress his hair, the belligerent youth and all about him fell under the spell and besought the white men to barber them as well. The gift of the marvellous implements ended all unpleasantness, and, after informing themselves of all that was going on, the two Spaniards made their way back to their canoe and Belen.<sup>1</sup>

Convinced now of the danger of an immediate attack by the savages, the Admiral took measures to anticipate it. On the 30th of March Don Bartholomew started from Belen with 74 men, marched across country to Veragua, and posting his force near by presented himself with but five men before the King's hut. The King was taken by surprise, but allowed Don Bartholomew to approach on condition that the other Spaniards remained at a distance. Under pretence of caring

<sup>1</sup> The relation of Diego Mendez of this, and of his still more redoubtable feat of the next year, is entitled to rank with the Mexican story of Bernal Diaz de Castillo, among the most delightful pieces of honest vanity in any language.

for the King's wounded leg, Don Bartholomew ran his hand over it and then felt his pulse. Suddenly closing his hand with an iron grip about the King's wrist, he beckoned his nearest men to fire a musket as a signal for the main force. In a few moments the whole body was on the ground, and the King, with his wives and children and many of the principal men, was a prisoner. A hurried march back to Belen was made, and the captives sent on board the four ships for greater security. Night had fallen when the transfer was made, and in the darkness the King, who had induced his sympathetic guard to loosen his bonds a little, succeeded in slipping out of the boat and swimming ashore. Pursuit was useless, and the Spaniards had to content themselves as best they might with the capture of the King's household and treasure. The latter was not very imposing, being valued at no more than 300 ducats, which was divided in due proportion between the Crown and the members of the raiding party, being treated as prize money and not as the result of a commercial bargain. Without its chief spoil, the importance of the foray shrank into narrow compass. The tactics displayed were merely a repetition of those employed in Hispaniola towards Caonabo and Guarionex a few years before. Had the King been secured, some permanent advantage might have resulted. As it was, the attempt to seize him only precipitated a catastrophe which was poorly compensated by a few pounds' weight of barbaric gold.

For the moment, all danger from the Indians seemed to be past. Don Bartholomew felt entirely able to cope with any future attempt that might be made against his garrison, since he had nearly eighty well-armed men under his command, a number of lombards or small cannon, and abundance of ammunition, while the caravel that was to be left him was an additional protection. Under these circumstances, when the Admiral was informed, one day early in April, that the swollen river had scoured a channel through the bar, he instantly decided to get his own vessels out into the deep water beyond, before the new passage should again shoal up. He had been anxiously awaiting such an opportunity for over two months, and now that the garrison was

provided for, he felt no hesitation in withdrawing his three caravels from the river in order to be free to pursue his voyage. It was not an easy task to get the ships over the bar and through the breakers, but it was accomplished in comparative safety. The Admiral and his men remarked with much misgiving that the teredo had been busily at work during the long season the squadron had lain in the river, and that the hulls were riddled far more than had been thought ; but so long as they rode at anchor in a comparatively smooth sea the extent of the damage was not apparent. Most of the men of the garrison had come out with the ships to help in warping them over the bar, or to take leave of their messmates, and Don Bartholomew was left on shore with only about twenty companions. It does not appear that it was the Admiral's intention to leave Belen at once ; the intimation is that he expected to lie outside for several days before getting under way. His new position was at a distance of several miles from the little settlement of new cabins, too far to see what was passing there, and hence, when Pedro Tristan, the captain of the flagship, proposed taking a couple of boats with a dozen men and re-crossing the bar to get fresh water from the springs up-stream, and salt from the storehouse, no reason existed for objection. The boats rowed away, passed the breakers in safety, and that was the last the Admiral saw of captain or men. Ten days of suspense and distress were to pass before he learned the cause of their disappearance.

It is strange that a veteran of Don Bartholomew's long and arduous experience — so much of it, too, with the savages of the New World — should have been willing to neglect the commonest precautions for the safety of his command at Belen. Surrounded on three sides by a jungle which would veil an army stationed within twenty yards of its border, he had not a picket posted or a scout in the forest. Doubtless his contempt for the feebleness of the natives was the reason ; but it was a poor one for so good a soldier. In this case he had to deal with an active and untiring foe, who had the patience to wait for his opportunity, and the courage to strike quickly and hard. The Indians, ever since the

escape of their chief, had, it now appeared, been watching the movements of the Christians from the adjoining forests. They had noiselessly gathered together a force of several hundred warriors, who were concealed within a convenient distance. When they saw three of the great white-sailed canoes passing out of the river with so large a part of the strangers' force, the savages thought their chance had come, and, breaking from their shelter of vines and trees, poured a rain of javelins and arrows upon Don Bartholomew's little band, and then rushed to close quarters with their huge wooden swords. The Spaniards rallied together and met the attack with that cheerful courage which leads one to forgive them so much. In a few moments the Veraguans had learned what the Hispaniolans could have told them, that the only safe Spaniard to handle was a dead one, and, leaving a number of dead on the ground, they took refuge in the bush. As several of the whites were wounded, including Don Bartholomew, who had a javelin through the chest, they did not venture to pursue the Indians, but kept up a discharge of cross-bow and arquebuse in reply to the savages' missiles. At this juncture, Pedro Tristan and his two boats appeared, slowly making their way up stream. In answer to the hail of their besieged comrades they drew near shore, but would render no help; Tristan asserting that if he allowed them to come aboard they would swamp his craft and all be lost, in which event the Admiral would be exposed to imminent peril also, as he was short of boats. Nor would the obstinate captain come ashore and take a hand in the fight, alleging that his orders were to get fresh water for the vessels out at sea, and he could take no risks. The utmost he would do was to promise to fill his casks as quickly as possible, and hasten back to the Admiral with a report of the garrison's plight. In order to do this quickly, he proposed rowing up the river until he reached a point where the water was fresh; but the Spaniards on shore warned him not to venture so far, as the woods were filled with the native warriors. Nothing moved, Tristan held to his determination, and started off. The next day, a solitary sailor, badly wounded, came into the little settlement and announced

that he was the only survivor of the stubborn captain's party. The Indians had attacked them at a narrow part of the river, overwhelmed them from the banks with arrows and darts, killed twelve out of the thirteen in the boats, and then broken these to pieces in sheer ferocity. The Spaniards, when they saw they were trapped, fought like men, even when covered with wounds. Tristan was no coward, and directed the defence with the same pertinacity he showed in other matters, until a javelin pierced through an eye into his brain. The survivor had escaped through the jungle, having dived overboard when the resistance was failing, and swum under water to a safe distance before taking to land. A little later on his story was confirmed, when the corpses of some of the luckless Spaniards came drifting down with the current, each with its billet of loathsome buzzards wrangling over their novel feast.

This disaster involved far more than the lives which were lost. The garrison had no boats capable of passing the heavy surf on the bar, and they knew that the Admiral had few left by which he could communicate with them. Flushed with their victory over Tristan and his crews, the Indians redoubled their efforts to exterminate the handful of Spaniards opposing them, and for four days the harassing contest was maintained. At the end of that time the exhausted defenders resolved to abandon the settlement, and pass to the opposite bank of the river, where a broad, sandy beach would enable them to keep out of range of the native missiles — unless the savages left the shelter of the woods, which they were not likely to do. A more effective measure would have been to take refuge on their caravel and run outside to join the Admiral; but some change of wind or current had again choked the channel on the bar, so that egress and entrance were alike impracticable. With the help of several canoes the more important supplies were transferred to the new site, and with the aid of the casks and bales a rude breastwork was erected. Here several days passed without especial incident, communication between the shore and the squadron outside being absolutely cut off by the heavy surf on the bar.

At the end of ten days of suspense, relief came to the garrison in a manner little to be expected. The long absence of Tristan, and of all news from the garrison, bore heavily upon the Admiral's mind. Attacked just at that juncture with an unusually prostrating fever, he was depressed by the gloomiest forebodings at a time when he was least fitted to cope energetically with the difficulties besetting him. Only a couple of boats remained to his squadron; if he were to send them ashore and they were lost on the bar, all on board his vessels would be helpless in the event of disaster overtaking their ships. In the condition in which these were, with the necessity of putting into port frequently, whatever course he might pursue after leaving Belen, the possession of seaworthy small boats was a matter of life and death. There seemed no alternative, consequently, but to wait until the bar was passable; but the delay was maddening. The unlucky Veraguans, who had been confined in the ship's hold ever since Don Bartholomew's raid and their King's escape, furnished the solution. One night, a number of the strongest heaped the ballast into a pile under the hatch, and, pressing on this, by a concerted movement gave it a mighty push, and threw it over on the deck with the sleeping sentinels lying on it. In a second, the most active among the Indians were overboard and swimming for shore, while their less fortunate companions were back in the hold with the hatch securely battened down above them. By the morning they had all hanged themselves from the deck-beams in their despair, holding their feet up from the planking so as to have room to stretch their poor necks; and this was the end of their part in the tragedy. But Pedro de Ledesma, the pilot, saw no reason why the Spaniards should not attempt as much to relieve their insupportable situation as the savages had risked for liberty, and he volunteered to swim over the bar if the Admiral would grant permission. This was given with hearty words of gratitude for the offer, and the Admiral ordered one of the remaining boats to row as near as was safe to the bar and then leave the rest to Ledesma's pluck and endurance. The anchorage was nearly four miles dis-



tant from the bar, and it is a question whether the Spanish pilot could have accomplished the whole undertaking, but with the long swim shortened he felt no fear as to the result. When the broken water was reached, he plunged overboard, and, after a few minutes of alternate quiet and struggle, was seen to emerge safely on the beach beyond. The boat waited for his return, and in due time he reappeared, repeated his daring feat and brought to the Admiral a full report of the condition of the garrison and the events of the past ten days. The men of the garrison, he said, wavered between flat mutiny and supplication; they begged the Admiral not to sail without them, but to wait until the bar was quiet enough to permit them to escape in canoes; if he did not, they declared, they would take their own ship and sail wherever the wind carried them, and upon the Admiral's head would lie the consequences. In the face of such a posture of affairs, it was useless to continue the project of colonization. The full strength proposed for the garrison was sufficient to maintain it in security against any probable native attack in the future; but nothing was to be expected from a disaffected body of men in a hostile country. Their fate would merely be that of the men of Navidad ten years before. The Admiral accordingly sent orders to Don Bartholomew — by whom is not stated — to retire from the settlement as soon as the state of the bar allowed. In a week the sea had fallen so as to permit a safe passage. Under the intelligent direction of Diego Mendez, the garrison canoes were lashed together after the fashion of catamarans, and, in six or seven trips, the arms, ammunition, and more important stores were safely transferred to the squadron. The "Gallego" was stripped and left inside the river; the doughty Mendez, with five companions, spending the last night on shore, and being the last to rejoin the squadron. Our Lady of Bethlehem, the first European settlement on the western continent, was left to the lizards and bats.

It was while he was lying at anchor off the Belen's mouth, consumed with fever and tormented with the sense of his own impotency and about the fate of Tristan and the garrison, that Columbus had the vivid dream which, under the mis-

nomer of "vision," has been the subject alternately of apology and contempt, according to the individual bias of his biographers. With the former sentiment we have nothing to do. The man's acts speak for themselves; if they were such as to require apology, no amount of effort will change their character. But the charge of hypocrisy and melodramatic fraud is one which, when made by apparently well-informed pens, is likely to gain creditors. Let us listen to the Admiral's own words:—

"The boats had gone inside for salt and water. The sea became high and ugly and did not permit them to get back. The Indians were many, and banded together and fought them. At last they killed them. My brother and all the other people were with one ship which had remained inside. I, very much alone, was outside, on that wild coast, with a strong fever, in such great grief. All hope of escaping was dead. Painfully I climbed to the highest part of the ship, calling in a feeble voice, weeping and hurriedly, to the commanders of your Majesties's navy<sup>1</sup> in all the quarters of the compass for aid, but they answered me not at all. Worn out, I fell asleep, moaning. I heard a very merciful voice saying: 'Oh, dull and slow to believe and to serve thy God, the God of all! What has He done more for Moses, or for David His servant? Since thou wast born He has ever had thee in His special care. When He saw thee at the age He thought best, He made thy name to resound marvellously throughout the earth. The Indies, which are such a rich part of the world, He gave thee for thine own; thou hast shared them as it pleased thee, and He gave thee power for this. Of the mysteries of Ocean, which were sealed with such strong chains, He gave thee the keys; and thou hast been obeyed in so many lands and hast received from Christians such honorable glory. What more did the Most High do for the people of Israel, when He brought them out of Egypt? Or for David, when, from being a shepherd, He made him King over India? Turn, then, to Him and confess thine error. His mercy is infinite. Thine old age shall not hinder any great thing. He has many vast inheritances to bestow. Abraham was more than a hundred years old when he begot Isaac, and was Sarah a young girl? Thou

<sup>1</sup> *Maestros de la guerra de Vuestras Altezas.* This seems to be an error of the copyist. The act of Columbus, however feeble, was rational and voluntary; there would be no pertinency in his summoning to his aid the distant navy of Spain.

callest for a doubtful succor: Answer; who has afflicted thee so much and so often — God, or the World? The privileges and promises which God gives, He does not break; nor does He say, after having received the stipulated service, that His intention was not thus and so and that He is to be understood in another way; nor does He inflict sufferings merely to color the exercise of power. He deals with scrupulous exactness; all that He promises He fulfils with usury. Is this the common usage? I have said what thy Creator has done for thee and does for all. This present moment shows the reward of these anxieties and perils which thou hast passed through in serving others.'

"I, while thus swooned away, heard all; but had not an answer for such true words, except to lament my errors. Whoever it was ended by saying, 'Do not fear; have faith. All these tribulations are written in marble, and not without cause.'"

When the Admiral had this dream he was a physical wreck, having been bedridden for almost eight months from gout and fever, to which was added, during part of the time, the outbreak of an old wound. What difficulties and emergencies he encountered in this time have been but lightly sketched in the preceding pages. If we bear in mind the fact that in this feeble condition he had passed through the whole of the rainy season on one of the most notoriously insalubrious coasts in the world, we shall be able to form an adequate idea of his bodily and mental state. A modern commander, in similar plight, would be kept under restraint by his fleet-surgeon; Columbus had no medical treatment more efficient than that of Master Bernal, the ship's apothecary, and plain Mark, her blood-letting surgeon-barber, and neither of these was likely to attempt any control over a High Admiral of Castile. That, in a moment of supreme exhaustion and despondency, his ingrained religious bias should assert itself predominantly does not seem remarkable. To stamp him as an impostor, weakly trying to sway the policy of King Ferdinand through the medium of a fabricated "vision," is a convenient theory which does not square with the facts. We have seen him repeatedly addressing his sovereigns with a frankness which would be startling but for their evident complaisance towards him in this respect. Looking upon this dream as a matter of deep

import, he included it in his hasty report from Jamaica, as he did other affairs of interest. "This letter I send by the hand and agency of Indians," he wrote, in preparing that report in his forlorn Jamaican exile, with not one chance in a thousand of leaving it alive; "a great miracle shall it be if it reach you." What a travesty of criticism to intimate that he concocted the whole story "to impress his sovereigns."

On Easter evening, towards the end of April, the three vessels now composing the squadron weighed anchor and again stood along the coast to the eastward, following their original course. It soon became apparent that they were in no condition to make a protracted voyage in any direction. Their hulls were so riddled by the teredo that, under the stress of motion, they began to look like sieves. Running into Porto Bello an attempt was made to stanch the worst leaks; but the "*Vizcaina*" proved to be past the calkers' art. The flagship and the "*Santiago*" were scarcely more seaworthy; but nothing remained but to crowd upon them the condemned vessel's crew, and leave her to rot in the harbor mud.<sup>1</sup> The two remaining caravels now contained the whole expedition, less the seventeen dead and plus a few Indians who were being taken to Spain to learn the language with a view to possible future settlement of their country. From Porto Bello the ships continued along the coast, passing Bastimentos and El Retrete without touching at either, and rounded Point San Blas in safety. Here they entered a group of small islands called by the Admiral the *Barbas*,<sup>2</sup> where they passed the night at anchor. Still keeping the same course, the vessels sailed some forty or fifty miles further alongshore to a point not far from the modern Cape Tiburon, near the entrance of the Gulf of Darien. By this time the condition of the ships was such that even the bravest of their crews protested against prose-

<sup>1</sup> Several years later this same harbor proved a haven of refuge to Nicuesa, who was guided thither by a former sailor of the Admiral's. They found the "*Vizcaina's*" anchor just where the sailor said it would be.

<sup>2</sup> The *Mulatas* Islands of modern charts.

cuting the voyage. "All the people were not enough, though using pumps, kettles, and casks, to bale out the water which was pouring in through the holes made by the worms," says stout-hearted Diego Mendez. The Admiral called his captains and pilots together, and they unanimously advised him to steer for San Domingo without a day's delay. Whatever Ovando might have done on their outward voyage, he could not, in common humanity, they claimed, refuse them an entrance under their present desperate circumstances. Without expressing his own opinion on this point, the Admiral concurred in their decision as to the futility of any farther exploration. On the 1st of May the ships' heads were turned northward, and the search for the strait was ended.

Columbus had neither abandoned his belief in the existence of the strait, nor did he doubt that he had been within almost touching distance of those oriental provinces whose attainment had been for so long his chief professional ambition. The Indians had certainly referred to a "narrow place" of some kind between two seas, and this he—and others long after him—understood to be a passage by water. His readiness to suspend further exploration was not due to any sense of defeat, but to the appalling ravage made by the teredo in the timbers of his ships. "The vessels were more perforated by the worms than is a honeycomb by bees," to apply his own description. Any one who is familiar with the extraordinary riddling powers of these pests of tropical waters will understand that the two unsheathed caravels were in no condition to hazard the voyage from Darien to Spain. "With one month of good weather, I would have completed my voyage," the Admiral distinctly declares. "Through the failure of my ships I did not venture to await it [such weather] in order to recommence the voyage." He recalls his suggestion for building a different type of craft for navigation in the western seas, and thinks that, had there been time to do this before leaving Spain, he would have reached his goal. The winds and currents in the Indies, he points out, are such that satisfactory headway can only be made when the breeze is dead abaft; "no one

dares to sail on a bowline, because in one day they will lose all they have gained in seven." This is the cause, he adds, why vessels sometimes remain in port for six or eight months awaiting a fair wind, — as they were occasionally compelled to do even in Spain, and these were the reasons by which he accounted for his slow progress along the coast and for his retirement from it before his task was accomplished. They seem to us to be more rational than the assertion afterwards made by some of his disaffected sailors, that the cause of his not finding the strait was his failure to start from Jamaica as he originally proposed. He himself informs us that he did not wish his men to know their whereabouts. Porras adds that, to accomplish this, he took from them all their maps and charts. In consequence, when the two ships left Terra Firma and steered northwards, some of the pilots thought they were bound for San Domingo, others for Porto Rico, and others still that they were heading direct for Spain.

As before said, the Admiral's pilots had secured some rough map of the discoveries of Bastidas. When, therefore, the Admiral first reached Porto Bello and El Retrete in December, those ports were recognized as having been the westward limit of that explorer's expedition. The second cruise of the Admiral to and beyond these points, after the withdrawal of the Belen garrison, appears to have been due rather to a desire to connect his own later discoveries definitely with those of Bastidas than to run into a favorable wind, as is usually supposed. Bastidas had certainly found no strait between Paria and Darien; if Columbus lapped over the termination of Bastidas's cruise, he would possess the certainty that no passage existed through the Darien coast. This is an intelligible motive for his keeping still eastward after finally leaving Veragua; while there was no ground then known to him for expecting a fairer wind off the Gulf of Darien than off the mouth of the Belen River. The negative result of his close scrutiny of the coast below Veragua had given shape to a vague idea which he had gathered from the natives of that region and from Don Bartholomew's accounts of his expeditions inland. The repeated references by the Indians to a province or country



lying to the westward which was washed by another sea had made a profound impression. Whether this were Ciguaré, Cathay, or an unnamed land was far from clear. The occupants of the canoe at Guanaja said it was a ten days' journey thither; the guides who took Don Bartholomew up the Veragua River told him it was twenty days away. They all seemed to intimate that this western kingdom, where gold was so plentiful and the arts so far advanced, possessed its own coast-line. It was not long before the Admiral had formulated the theory that another ocean lay behind Veragua and Cariay. If so, his faith in a strait was well-founded. But if no strait existed to the eastward of Veragua, it must lie further to the west or north. There was something else besides "visions," and puerile schemes to humbug the shrewdest monarch in Christendom, at work in the Admiral's mind while he lay on his pallet during the long weeks at Belen and Porto Bello.

"It appears that these countries are situated, with relation to Veragua, as Tortosa is to Fuenterabia, or as Pisa is to Venice," was his conclusion. That is to say, that the new continent which he had discovered three years before at Paria, which Pinzon and Lepe had carried ten degrees below the Equator and Hojeda and Bastidas had traced westward to Porto Bello, was, although on a vastly greater scale, a huge peninsula like Spain and Portugal, or Italy; and that the ocean encompassing it approached so near to the Gulf of Mexico (as we call it) in the latitude of Veragua, that the latter coast was separated from that to the west only as the opposite cities of the Spanish and Italian peninsulas are separated. A glance at any map of Europe will satisfy the fair-minded reader that, in spite of his imperfect comprehension of the Indian signs and language, Columbus had arrived at a very just conception of the relative positions of the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, and of the narrow neck into which the southern continent was contracted above the Gulf of Darien. Those who detect evidences of his insanity in the account of his dream, pass slightly over the words which we have quoted and which show his quick geographical perceptions, although both references are contained in the

same report. He may have had some crude idea of a sea beyond Veragua, they grudgingly concede ; but it was nothing more than a speculative fancy. In this they do him a gratuitous wrong. Although his words, written within three months of leaving Belen, are sufficiently plain, he was much more explicit in a letter subsequently written to Peter Martyr. That indefatigable chronicler of geographical novelties was not content with a passing reference to a problem of such surpassing interest as the possible existence of a new ocean, and obtained a detailed presentation of the Admiral's argument. We quote him literally, from Richard Eden's quaint but effective translation : —

“Colonus the Admiral the first finder of these regions affirmeth that the tops of the mountains of Veragua are more than fifty miles in height [!]. He saith furthermore that in the same region at the roots of the mountains the way is open to the south sea, and compareth it, as it were, between Venice and Genoa. . . . He affirmeth also that this land reacheth forth toward the south : and from hence it taketh the beginning of breadth, like as from the Alps out of the narrow thigh of Italy we see the large and main lands of France, Germany, and Pannonia. . . . The Admiral supposeth that on the left hand, in sailing toward the west, this land is joined to India beyond the River of Ganges ; and that on the right hand toward the north, it be extended to the frozen sea, beyond the Hyperboreans and the North Pole. So that both these seas (that is to say, the South Sea, which we said to be found by Vaschus,<sup>1</sup> and our Ocean) should join and meet in the corners of that land ; and that the waters of these seas do not only [*i.e.*, unbrokenly] enclose and compass the same without division as Europe is enclosed.” . . .

This, then, was the geographical fruit of the Admiral's wearisome voyage. The great continent in the South extended west to India, but dwindled to a neck of land near

<sup>1</sup> This allusion to Vasco Nufiez de Balboa, and his subsequent discovery of the Pacific, only emphasizes the correctness of Columbus's earlier inference. It is scarcely necessary to point out that Peter Martyr was writing several years after the death of Columbus ; but it is equally obvious that he was transcribing from some letter of the Admiral which contained the views he epitomizes so clearly.

Veragua; the northern continent of Cabot reached to the North Pole. Between them rolled the same ocean which bathed the shores of China, India, and the Spice Islands; and this ocean communicated with the Atlantic, or the Ocean Sea, by a strait which broke somewhere through the mountain chain which connected the northern and the southern continents. This passage he had failed to find; but he believed it to be there. Had he been favored with but a single month more of good weather, he thought, and had his ships been serviceable, he would have found it! More "delusions," if you please; but a singularly close approach to a correct estimate of western geography. Near enough, at all events, to induce half a dozen bold spirits to attempt to find the "South Sea" as soon as the results of the Admiral's latest exploration were known. We hear much of his failure to discover the strait he started to find;<sup>1</sup> but little of the ocean he so unerringly located. Could we but know what passed between the Admiral and his brother when the latter returned from his journey to the summit of the Veraguan mountain pass, we might find that, years before the fiery Balboa, the more phlegmatic Don Bartholomew had heard of the blue streak in the west which heralded the existence of the Peaceful Sea.

Columbus was sadly aware that Ferdinand and Isabella would not gauge the success of his expedition by its geographical results. To them one string of Indian names was much like another; if he had failed to find an entrance into

<sup>1</sup> In Winsor's "Narrative and Critical History of America," Vol. II. p. 218, is reproduced a map of Maiollo of as late a date as 1527 in which the "*Streito Cubitoso*" (Query: *Streito dubitoso*, or Doubtful Strait?) is delineated as cutting across the Isthmus from ocean to ocean; and as late as 1532 Münster reproduced it in his map. We have differed so radically from Dr. Winsor's estimate of Columbus and his work, as given in "Christopher Columbus, and how he received and transmitted the Spirit of Discovery," that we the more readily admit the obligations which, in common with all students of our early history, we are under for the learned author's "Narrative and Critical History." It is a monument of patient and most laborious research, and, little as we may agree with some of its conclusions, it has spared us too many hours of wearisome investigation to receive aught but grateful and admiring acknowledgment at our feeble hands.

the eastern seas, his standing with them was gone — unless he brought gold. We have seen that, beyond verifying the existence of that metal in abundance, and securing such quantity of it by barter as would confirm his assertions, he did not propose at first to tarry even where it was most plentiful. “I was not in favor of turning back,” is his emphatic comment upon the return to Veragua suggested by his men. But when he was forced, by the destruction of his ships, to give up the search for the strait, his thoughts recurred, naturally enough, to the compensation assured to his sovereigns in the incalculable wealth of the Veraguan coasts. Warned by the bitter consequences which flowed from his neglect in earlier years to allow for the difficulties to be surmounted before even great natural riches could be securely gathered into the royal coffers, he imposes upon himself a rigid exactness of language. “This punishment leads me now to say nothing but what I hear from the natives of the country. One thing I venture to say, because there are so many witnesses, and that is, that I have seen in this land of Veragua greater evidence of gold in the first two days than in Hispaniola during four years.” After alluding to the fertility of the country, its easily defended ports, and the cowardly disposition of its people — as judged from the Spanish point of view, he says: “Your Majesties are as much lords over this as over Xeres or Toledo. Such of your ships as may go thither will go as though to their own home. From there they will gather gold. In other countries, in order to have what is in them, it is needful that they take it by force, or they will return empty; and while on land they [*i.e.* the Spaniards] must trust their persons to a savage.”<sup>1</sup> He explains that, when he found his ships were unseaworthy, his first idea was to settle in Veragua with all his force, as the most advantageous course to follow

<sup>1</sup> “The man was mad,” is Dr. Winsor’s charitable comment on this passage, as it is *mis*-translated in Mr. Major’s “Select Letters of Columbus,” published by the Hakluyt Society. Had the learned writer referred to the Admiral’s own language, he would have seen that, so far from being “mad,” Columbus was showing plain common sense in his remarks to his sovereigns.

under the circumstances. Afterwards he decided to withdraw everybody. "The apprehension that no ships might ever touch there decided me to do this, and the reflection that when relief is sent everything will be provided for." He would not sanction a general robbery of the Indians' hoards of gold, because "it did not seem well to me nor for your Majesties' interest that it should be taken by violence. Good treatment will avoid discontent and an ill name, and will result in its all reaching the Treasury, so that not a grain is left." In saying this he clearly makes the distinction, as always before, between those natives who were peaceable and those who were unfriendly. Don Bartholomew's raid upon the King of Veragua was a necessary war measure, not robbery.

The "secret" both of the strait and of the gold coast was confined to himself and his brother. Pursuing a policy of absolute reticence as to his own ideas, and taking from his men such charts as they possessed or drew, the Admiral strove to prevent his followers from having any exact knowledge of the whereabouts of Veragua, at least until he could communicate with the King and Queen. In this he was immeasurably aided by the constant changes of direction forced upon him by the succession of gales encountered throughout the voyage. "One hundred and fifty men went with me," he writes, "among them many qualified to be pilots and notable mariners; not one of them can give a reliable account of where I went or whence I came." "Let them say, if they know," he repeats, "where is the situation of Veragua. I reiterate that they cannot give any other answer or report, except that they went to certain countries where there is much gold, and testify to that; but they are ignorant of the road to return to it. To reach it, it would be necessary to discover it again, as at first." But in taking these elaborate precautions for concealment, the Admiral had no intention other than to escape a repetition of the utterly unjust treatment to which he had been subjected after his former discoveries. "I cannot think of Hispaniola and Paria and the other countries without grieving," he frankly declares. "I felt that the experience

with them would have to be reversed for these other lands. . . . It is not just that those who have always been opposed to this enterprise should enjoy its benefits, or their children." He did not propose, if he could prevent it, that Veragua should be overrun by reckless adventurers as Paria had been. "I hold in greater estimation this discovery and its mines," is his assertion, "with its port and adjacent territory, than all else that has been done in the Indies. This is no child to be turned over to a step-mother." Within ten years his estimate of the value of Veragua was as fully justified as was his theory of an ocean beyond it. So famous was it for treasure that the descendants of Columbus, when choosing the title under which they should be known, selected that of Dukes of Veragua as being the one likely to reflect upon them the greatest distinction.

That he did not himself gather any more of the fruit of this last harsh experience than he had of those preceding it, troubled the Admiral less than it since has his biographers. "I did not come to sail this voyage to gain glory or wealth," he affirms, "because all expectation of that was dead within me. I came to serve your Majesties with honest purpose and hearty zeal, and I do not lie." For one, we believe the great sailor. His attempt had resulted otherwise than he had hoped; but he loyally set himself to turn it to the greatest advantage possible for his royal patrons. His heart was in his explorations; but his judgment led him to give due heed to the material benefits incidentally discovered. A remarkable, almost unique, succession of catastrophes foiled his main purpose, and he labored to secure a compensation for the Crown in the face of his personal disappointment and deep distress.

"Let those who are used to criticise and find fault reply now, saying from their own safe corner, Why did you not do so and so out yonder? Heartily do I wish they were in this undertaking," is his pertinent reflection, after rehearsing the story of his cruise. It is, perhaps, as applicable to-day as when its ink was fresh.





## XXIII.

### THE GREATEST PERIL OF ALL.

**D**ESPITE the expectations of his pilots, and the dangerous condition of his vessels, it was not the Admiral's purpose to make direct for Hispaniola on leaving the Gulf of Darien. The remembrance of Ovando's refusal to aid him the year before was too fresh to risk a repetition of it. His plan was rather to reach the southern coast of Jamaica, as near as possible to Cape Morant, whence he could despatch messengers by boat to the opposite cape of Hispaniola, and so communicate with the governor at San Domingo. Jamaica, having as yet no Spanish colony, was within his own bailiwick, although within a day's easy sail of the western extremity of Hispaniola. It would serve as a secure refuge, even in the event of a second rebuff from Ovando, and from it an appeal to the Crown for assistance could, in the last extremity, be made. The governor could not decline to transmit the Admiral's despatches to their Majesties. Another consideration which may have influenced Columbus in laying his course for Jamaica, was its closer proximity to the coast he was abandoning. His two caravels were now literally in the last stages of dissolution. If he could run across the intervening ocean to Jamaica, he might save them; but repeated experiences along the Hispaniolan shores had shown how likely to be renewed was his contest with the elements if he attempted to fetch San Domingo Harbor with his crazy barks. Even as it was, he found his calculations again frustrated by the winds and currents, for on the tenth day after leaving the Isthmus he

sighted the two islands which are called the Caymans on modern maps, but which he named the Tortugas.<sup>1</sup> Although within 200 miles of Jamaica he could not make it in face of the head winds and current, but was forced to run northward instead. On May the 13th he found himself once more among the islets and cays of the Queen's Gardens, whence he passed to the adjacent coast of Cuba, and came to anchor not far from the site of the modern city of Trinidad. To Columbus this was still the province of Mangi, "which touches that of Cathay," as he had concluded in 1494. It was part and parcel of eastern Asia, on the coast which, as he supposed, swept around to the west and south towards Cariay and Veragua.<sup>2</sup> The pilots and seamen were more surprised than gratified to find themselves as far from Hispaniola as when they left the shores of Darien, and murmured loudly at their commander's want of seamanship in so far missing his supposed destination. He, however, keeping his own counsel, followed the shore toward the eastward, hoping to fetch Cape Cruz and thence run over to Jamaica as he had done in '94. Mindful of the perils he then encountered from shoals and banks, he kept well out to sea at the present time, and was thus exposed to the full fury of a gale which came up on the second day out. To escape this he ran back to the shelter of the islands along-shore, losing his sails in the manœuvre. To add to his dilemma, during the night three of the four cables which were paid out from his own ship parted, and his consort, dragging her own anchors, bore down upon him in the darkness and crashed into his vessel with disastrous force. "The [remaining] anchor, by the way it stood by me, was

<sup>1</sup> Misled by the identity of name, Irving places these islands to the *north-west* of Hispaniola, and Dr. Winsor to the west thereof. The result is confusing to the student of Columbus's voyage, who reads of the vessels arriving only three days later on the southern shore of Cuba. Las Casas positively identifies the Tortugas with the Caymans, and the latter are due south from Cienfuegos.

<sup>2</sup> Irving and those who follow him make Columbus speak of this Mangi as part of the Isthmus of Darien. The Admiral himself distinctly refers to it as the Mangi of his Cuban cruise, and the identification is supported by Diego Mendez.

what, after Our Lord, saved me," he says. Had his last cable parted, both caravels must have gone on the sands. As it was, they held their ground until daylight, and then found a safer haven, where six days were passed in tinkering up the battered hulks and waiting for fair weather. When that came he renewed his voyage, only to be beaten back by another storm, and driven to seek refuge in the little island he had left.

At last, after more than a week of detention, he got under way again, and succeeded in crossing over to Jamaica, where, on the 23rd of June, he entered the harbor of Puerto Bueno which had been his first landfall after discovering the island nine years before. The circumstances of his present visit to the scenes which had then so charmed him formed one of those violent and dramatic contrasts with which the career of Columbus abounded. At that time, he was in the plenitude of his vice-regal power; returning from a cruise which was peculiarly successful from his standpoint, since it had established the identity of Cuba as part of Asia, and added lordly Jamaica to the already long list of his gifts to Spain. Now, he was at the very lowest ebb of his fortunes; bound to his pallet by chains stronger than those of Bobadilla, harassed by the absorbing question of daily food, knowing that his leaky tubs were sailing their last knots, doubtful of his reception by the natives, aware of the mutinous spirit rising among his own men, and forced to contemplate the imminent possibility of disaster to his companions, and almost certain death to himself before succor could reach them or him. The last rations were being doled out; the ships had lost sails, anchors and rigging; they had reached a stage where "with three pumps, basins, and kettles, all hands together could not bail out the water which entered the hull, nor for this curse of the teredo is any other cure possible," to use the Admiral's own words. Hopeless as was the outlook on board the caravels, he only passed a single day in Puerto Bueno. The harbor was situated in the north-west corner of Jamaica, at almost that part of the island most remote from Hispaniola. It was essential to get as near the eastern end as practicable, so as to be

within the shortest possible distance of the latter coast, and Puerto Bueno was, moreover, uninhabited and destitute of supplies. For the last time the gaping hulls put to sea, steering eastward, close alongshore. It was soon apparent that they might founder at any moment, so fast were the leaks gaining on the crews. A few miles further on they came to another bay, where a native village held out the hope of provisions and shelter. The caravels were now so full of water that they could with difficulty make an entrance, but after much trouble they were headed in shore and run as far up towards the beach as their water-logged hulls would allow. If they were to sink, the shallow bottom was near enough to prevent loss of life. "Who would believe what I here write?" inquires the Admiral; "I declare that I have not told one part in a hundred in this letter."

The first requisite was to provide subsistence for the command. From the neighboring village only a scanty supply could be obtained, and the Spaniards' stay might be long. Diego Mendez with three comrades was sent on a foraging expedition through the neighborhood, provided with an ample store of trifles for barter, and carrying instructions to arrange with the chiefs of the villages visited to send regular supplies of cassava, maize, and other Indian foods to Santa Gloria, as the Admiral had named his harbor of refuge. Mendez journeyed on foot as far as Cape Antonio near the eastern end of the island, contracting as carefully as any modern quartermaster for immediate supplies as well as for future deliveries, sending back his companions one by one at the head of a string of native porters loaded with the results of his work, and arranging for the systematic continuance of the service. From the cape he returned by sea, bringing a flotilla of half a dozen canoes laden with the wholesome Indian provisions, and able to report that food would be plentiful in the future. He had established a permanent scale of prices in beads and other trinkets for the supplies to be received, and both natives and Spaniards were delighted with the outcome of his mission. The Admiral's critics explain this obviously intelligent and just measure by the fact that, having no ships to retreat to, he

was afraid to treat the Indians otherwise than well. If so, it is the only time on record that 140 fully armed Spaniards were afraid of anything in the way of naked Indians when their own lives were at stake.

During the absence of Mendez, Columbus had discussed their situation exhaustively with his principal followers. The unanimous opinion was that an appeal should at once be made to Ovando for aid, and, failing that, a messenger should be sent to Spain by the first fleet leaving San Domingo. In this the Admiral concurred, although with no great hope of moving the governor of Hispaniola to lend any effective assistance. His own idea was that his command would have to sustain themselves as best they might until relief was sent from Spain, which might not reach them for a year and a half, if at all. His reluctance to disobey their Majesties' orders, coupled with his doubt as to Ovando's readiness to render help, led him to be skeptical as to the chance of anything being accomplished in San Domingo. At the same time he was bound to make the effort. A very practical problem requiring solution was the means of getting any message or dispatch at all to Hispaniola. The shortest distance between the islands was from Cape Morant to Cape Tiburon, a clear 100 miles. His first intention was to induce some friendly natives to attempt to cross over, in one of their large canoes, from the eastern end of Jamaica to Hispaniola. Although the distance was so great, he knew that such journeys were not unusual among the amphibious islanders, to whom the swamping of a canoe was a laughing matter. He therefore set to work preparing letters to Ovando, the King and Queen, and some of his devoted friends in Spain, recounting the events of his voyage, and asking for the means of escaping from his present straits. Before these were completed, Diego Mendez arrived from his journey and volunteered to make the daring effort in person. The offer was as promptly accepted by the Admiral. Mendez put a false keel on his canoe, nailed a strip of planking along her gunwales to give her a higher freeboard, and provided a mast and sail for use in case the wind should serve. The crew was to consist of six stalwart native

paddlers. Such was the activity shown in the preparations that in two days the little craft was ready for her perilous expedition.

Several of the Admiral's letters which were entrusted to Mendez have come down to us. They bear the date of July 7th, which must have been approximately that of the messenger's departure. One of them, addressed to Ferdinand and Isabella, is famous as the *lettera rarissima*, and from it we have quoted freely in preceding chapters. It recites the chief incidents of the voyage, his so-called "vision," and dwells at great length upon the vast importance of Veragua as a source of future revenue. In urging this upon their Majesties, the Admiral lays stress upon the supreme power of gold in all mundane affairs, and the duty of all good Christians to amass it. In the eyes of his critics this stands as a frank declaration of the sordid avarice which they insist consumed him. If such were the case, he assuredly chose a singular season and place for making his avowal. But if we read his words with due relation to their context and his known ambitions, we find another sufficient cause for his anxiety to impress upon his sovereigns the sacred duty of securing the gold so bountifully offered to them by his discovery of Veragua. Both the King and Queen had declared to the Admiral, after his return from the finding of San Salvador, that they approved his scheme for the recovery of Jerusalem from the Moslem. The events which had since elapsed had deprived him of the great revenues anticipated successively from Hispaniola and Paria; but he was still under the vow he had reported to Pope Sextus in 1502. If their Majesties would but follow his counsel and save Veragua from the evils which had overtaken his earlier discoveries, ample resources were assured for the prosecution of his crusade, notwithstanding past disasters.

"The Genoese, Venetians, and every other people which possesses pearls, precious stones, or other commodities of value," argues the Admiral, "carry them to the ends of the Earth in order to barter them and exchange them for gold. Gold is supremely excellent; out of gold is wealth constituted, and



whoever possesses it can by its means do whatever he wishes in the world. It even suffices to bring souls into Paradise. The lords of those territories in the country of Veragua, so I am told, bury the gold they own in their graves when they die. Solomon brought from a single voyage 666 hundredweight of gold, besides what the merchants and sailors had, and besides what was paid in Arabia. From this gold he made 200 spears and 300 shields, and he made the panels which were above them of gold adorned with precious stones, and made many other things of gold, such as large vases richly set with precious stones. Josephus writes this in his 'Antiquities.' In the Paralipomenon and in the Book of Kings it is also recounted. Josephus thinks that this gold was obtained in the Aurea. If this were true, I maintain that those mines of the Aurea are one with and correspond to those of Veragua; which, as I have above said, extend twenty days' travel toward the west and are at an equal distance from the Pole and the Equator. Solomon bought all that gold, silver, and gems, but there you may send and gather it if you so choose. David in his will left to Solomon 3000 hundredweight of gold from the Indies, to aid in building the Temple, and according to Josephus it came from these same countries. Jerusalem and Mt. Zion are to be restored by the hand of Christians: who they are to be God, by the mouth of his prophet, in the 14th Psalm declares. The Abbot Joaquim said that this work was to issue from Spain. St. Jerome disclosed to the Holy Woman the way thither. Years ago the Emperor of Cathay sent for wise men to teach him the faith of Christ. Who is it that shall offer himself for this enterprise? If Our Lord conducts me to Spain, I bind myself to take such an one to him, together with the word of God, in safety."

We may smile at the geographical speculations of the writer, and shrug our shoulders at his crusading schemes, but we cannot deny the earnestness of his convictions. There is not a single word in his argument which denotes a selfish purpose. The next sentence would do honor to any hero of African or Arctic exploration:—

"These people who have come with me have passed through incredible perils and labors. I entreat your Majesties, because they are poor, that you cause them to be paid at once and give some reward to each one according to his rank; for in my belief they bear the best news which has ever entered Spain."

His own avaricious and grasping nature is shown in the demands made for himself:—

“If it pleases your Majesties to graciously send me the assistance of a ship which exceeds 64 tons burthen, with 200 hundredweight of biscuit and some other provisions, it will be sufficient to carry me and these people to Spain from Hispaniola.”

Even in his dire extremity he remembers his master's orders about touching at San Domingo, and repeats his intention to respect them:—

“I have already said that there are not 28 leagues distance between Jamaica and Hispaniola. Not if the ships were in condition to make the voyage would I go there. I have already said that I was ordered, in the name of your Majesties, not to land there. Whether this action has done any good, God only knows.”

It is only at the end of his letter—which, not unnaturally, is far from being a model of methodical composition—that he makes a personal plea. Touching upon his long and laborious services, his cruel degradation and spoliation, and the lying accusations brought against him by jealous enemies, he pleads for the restoration of his honors, so often and solemnly promised, and for righteous punishment upon those who have wronged and robbed him.

“The honest purpose I have ever cherished in serving your Majesties and the unparalleled wrongs done me do not permit my spirit to be silent, much as I desire it: I beg that your Majesties will pardon me. For myself, I am lost, as I have said. Heretofore I have grieved for others; may Heaven now have pity upon me and the Earth weep for me. In worldly matters I have not now a single maravedi for an alms; in spiritual, I am imprisoned here in the Indies in the situation described,—exiled upon this rock, broken in health, looking daily for death, surrounded by innumerable, cruel, and hostile savages, and so cut off from the holy sacraments of our holy Church that this soul will be forgotten if it takes leave of the body here. Whoever possesses charity, truth, and justice, weep for me! I did not come on this voyage to navigate in order to win honor and riches; that is certain, for the hope of all that was already dead within me. I came to serve your Majesties with honest purpose and hearty zeal, and I do not lie. I humbly request your Majesties that, if it should please God to rescue me from

here, you may permit me to go to Rome and other pilgrimages; — Whose life and eminent estate may the Holy Trinity protect and increase. Dated in the Indies, on the Island of Jamaica, the 7th of July, 1503.”

Such was the ending of the last letter which the Admiral wrote to his sovereigns from the New World. He thought it likely that it would be the last time he should address them in life. The chances of his surviving until some relief arrived were of the remotest, even should Mendez succeed in reaching Ovando; in the event of his failure, the Admiral and many a man among his following were likely to find their resting place beneath the dark shades of the jungle fringing Santa Gloria Bay.

Mendez, with a single comrade and their oarsmen, pluckily set out in his frail craft along the coast. On the way he was attacked by a party of Indian sea-rovers, but escaped capture and reached the eastern end of the island in safety. There, the wind being for the moment unfavorable, he left the canoe and went on foot some distance away to reconnoitre. Falling in with a party of natives, they took him prisoner and forthwith proceeded to play some game, with him as its prize. While they were thus engaged he slipped away, regained his canoe, and started back to Santa Gloria. It was clear that he must have protection in getting away from Jamaica. He reached the caravels about a fortnight after leaving them and reported his adventures. At the same time he announced his entire readiness to repeat the effort. The Admiral thereupon selected Bartolomé de Fiesco, a Genoese of rank and his own kinsman, who had commanded the abandoned “*Vizcaina*,” to join Mendez in a second attempt. Each of the messengers was to have a canoe manned by ten Indian paddlers. In the event of their attaining Hispaniola, Fiesco was to return to the Admiral with Ovando’s reply, and Mendez was to sail to Spain by the first conveyance with the letters and despatches. Don Bartholomew was asked to march along the coast with sixty men as an escort for the canoes, and to remain at the end of the island until they were well on their way towards Hispaniola. Both parties reached the eastern

extremity of Jamaica without molestation, and, after waiting three or four days for a smooth sea, the canoes put out on their hazardous transit. The land force waited for three days to receive them if any disaster drove them back, and then retraced their way to the ships and reported the apparently successful issue of the undertaking. Mendez and Fiesco did, in fact, succeed in making the passage and landing somewhere in the long and narrow promontory which juts out from the southwestern shores of Hayti, but they narrowly missed destruction. The sea had been calm, indeed, during their voyage; but five days had been required to make it instead of one-half that time as they had expected. Their water and provisions had given out on the third day, and the native paddlers, exhausted with such prolonged exertion, had quickly succumbed to thirst and hunger. Only the accidental sighting of the lonely rocks of Navassa,<sup>1</sup> outlined against the rising moon on the fourth night of their passage, saved the lives of all. Had they been in any other position at the moment, they must have passed by the islet in the darkness; as it was, they found enough rain-water in the hollows of its rocky surface, and shell-fish on its shore, to allay their sufferings, and provide them for the remainder of their journey. From Cape Tiburon the messengers started alongshore for San Domingo, but learning on the way that Ovando was in Xaragua, near their first landing, Mendez started over land to join him, while Fiesco continued on the seat of government. So far as their loyal endeavor could, the relief of their commander and comrades at Santa Gloria was now assured.

Meantime the forlorn settlement at Santa Gloria Bay had assumed an air of semi-permanence, as if in grim determination to await the worst with resolution. The "Santiago" had, as early as the 23rd of July, been run up on the beach, and allowed to settle into her final berth in the sands. On

<sup>1</sup> This little island, now somewhat noted for its guano deposit, lies about forty miles west of Hayti, and was declared by proclamation of the President to be United States territory in 1891. It is, therefore, the only portion of our national domain which is directly connected with the voyages and discoveries of Columbus.

the 12th of August the flagship was warped alongside her, beams laid across both decks, and cabins after the native fashion built on the platform thus provided. By this means the Admiral secured sufficient accommodation for his men without risking the complications sure to result from their residence among the natives on shore, while obtaining a slight advantage of position in the event of any hostile demonstration by the Indians. One danger was ever present to his mind — the ease with which his palm-thatched and reed-walled cabins might be fired, and with them so much of his wretched hulks as were above water — but this would have been an equal menace had he built cabins on shore. In these narrow quarters, with the floods of heaven pouring from above and the waters of the bay washing about the wooden caverns beneath their feet, the Spaniards passed the dreary months of the rainy season. The Admiral's illness kept him a constant prisoner on his pallet; for months he was unable to walk across his own cabin. The men, left to their own devices, spent their time when on board in growling at the leaders who had brought them to such a pass, and when on shore in amusing themselves at the expense of the long-suffering and overawed natives. Under the insidious provocation of the Porras brothers, — Francisco, the captain of the "Santiago," and Diego, the royal comptroller, — ably seconded by Master Bernal, the fleet apothecary, their grumbling gradually took the shape of a definitely planned mutiny. All the old stories of the Admiral's disfavor at Court were revived, and augmented by hints that Mendez and Fiesco had, in reality, merely gone to attend to his private interests, without a thought of securing aid for their shipwrecked comrades. This leaven worked as it was intended, until, on the day after New Year's, 1504, Francisco Porras gathered together forty-eight discontents, and boldly entered the Admiral's cabin.

"It appears to us, Señor," he announced, "that you have no desire to take us to Spain, but intend to keep us here in abandonment."

Taken by surprise by such an outbreak, the Admiral's first impulse was to conciliate as far as possible the malcon-

tents. Dwelling on the obvious impossibility of doing anything until relief should arrive in response to the appeals sent by Mendez and Fiesco, he pointed out that his own desire to escape must necessarily be greater than that of any one else, both from motives of interest and because of his immense responsibility for those with him. He reminded them that he had discussed all possible remedies with themselves, and followed the course which seemed to all the best, and added that if they had anything else to propose he would gladly hear them now. To this Porras defiantly answered that there had been too much talking already; either the Admiral would set out at once with them for Spain, or he would stay where he was. Turning his back upon his bed-ridden commander he shouted to his associates: "For my part, I am bound for Castile with all who want to go with me!" In a moment the ships rang with cries of "I am with you," "and I," "and I," while the mutineers, arms in hand, quickly took positions commanding the decks and their houses. Some of the more reckless were for ending the careers of the Admiral and Don Bartholomew then and there, but beyond such menacing shouts no personal affront was offered. Hearing the uproar, the Admiral rose from bed and staggered towards the door leading out on deck. If some of his attendants had not caught him and led him back to his couch he would have fallen, so weak he was. At the same moment Don Bartholomew had grasped a lance, and started to settle the account single-handed with the mutineers; but he, too, was restrained by the loyal bystanders, and forced into his brother's cabin. This done, some of the Admiral's adherents entered into a parley with Porras. Nothing would be gained by murder, they argued; the death of a man of the Admiral's rank would inevitably be visited on the conspirators, be they where they might. If they wanted to make the effort to reach Hispaniola themselves, let them go their ways, and the Admiral and his followers would remain where they were. After much talk backwards and forwards, Porras agreed to this. That same day, taking ten canoes, he started off eastward with his companions. It is not without a certain feeling of regret



that one sees the name of Pedro de Ledesma among the deserters; but in this case neither his courage nor his skill as navigator availed them. They reached the end of the island and put off for Hispaniola, having impressed the needful number of Indians to paddle them across. A light gale which sprang up threatened to swamp their cranky crafts soon after leaving shore. To ease them, the Spaniards pitched overboard all the native paddlers, and hacked off their hands when the poor wretches strove to get breath by holding on to the gunwales. Not daring to make the long traverse alone, they put back to the Jamaican coast. Here a month was passed in fruitless debate. Some wanted to make the effort to reach Cuba; others, to make another attempt for Hispaniola; others, to go back and make peace with the Admiral; and others still, to attack him on the caravels and possess themselves of the arms and merchandise. Finally, in the absence of any definite plan, they began to raid at their leisure among the native villages. It was preferable to being cooped up on the stranded caravels under the orders of the Admiral, at all events.

With the little colony at Santa Gloria the monotonous months dragged wearily along. There had been little expectation of hearing anything from Hispaniola before the close of the year, 1503; but with the new year the Admiral and those who remained with him looked daily for the sails of the relieving caravel. As the rains grew less violent and frequent, and the bright weather marked the change of season, the exiled explorers began to lose heart. Their long confinement under such depressing influences told upon their health, the Indians began to be indifferent in supplying provisions, and the feeblest among the Spaniards succumbed. By March there were half a dozen graves to bear witness to the ravages of fever and privation, and each month now was adding to the number. The Admiral obtained a renewal of activity in the commissariat, by calling the Indian caciques together, in advance of a lunar eclipse, and warning them that the Almighty would darken the face of the moon if they failed to help the Christians. The occurrence of the predicted miracle at the time specified,

February the 17th, easily convinced the superstitious natives that the white leader was a great medicine man, and perceptibly increased their activity in furnishing his people with food. But the absorbing question with the Spaniards was not so much the supplying of their needs in their present quarters as some indication of their being able to abandon them altogether. A rumor which was passed by the Indians across the island from its southern coast, to the effect that a vessel like those of the Spaniards had been seen drifting, helpless and abandoned, among the strong currents which swept those lower shores, excited much gloomy discussion on the land-bound caravels. A few claimed that the report had been originated by Porras in order to detach more of the Admiral's following by destroying their last hopes of relief; but most of the Spaniards were disposed to accept it as furnishing a solution, however unwelcome, of the long absence of news from Diego Mendez. By June this belief had gained such ground that Bernal, the apothecary, and a couple of kindred spirits, had succeeded in inducing quite a number of the Admiral's men to agree to desert him and join Porras. His health, they argued, was such as to prohibit him from being moved, and it was preposterous to expect them all to stay in that unknown corner until they were carried off by the fevers, merely because their commander was a doomed man. Let those who still held to the dream of help arriving from Hispaniola stay where they were; the men of spirit would join Porras and his merry men in their roving life among the forests and mountains of the interior.

Had they but known it, their former comrade had labored unceasingly during seven long months to move Ovando to despatch assistance to them and their leader. As soon as he reached Xaragua, after leaving Fiesco, Mendez had laid the Admiral's situation before the governor, and implored him to send the needed aid to his colleague and fellow countrymen. For just so long did Ovando postpone lifting a finger to help the Admiral. The brief report made by Mendez of this prolonged inaction is too naïve to be omitted, especially as it affords an opportunity of comparing the new

governor's reputedly gentle methods of administration with the much-criticised harshness of the first Viceroy.

"He kept me there seven months," wrote Mendez, wholly innocent of any irony, "until he had finished hanging and burning 88 caciques, all of them lords over vassals; and among them Anacaona, the greatest chieftainess of the island, whom all the others obeyed and served. When this was ended I came on foot to San Domingo, which was 70 leagues distant, and waited there, expecting vessels to arrive from Spain, for none had come thence in more than a year. While this comedy was performing, it pleased God that three ships arrived, of which I bought one and loaded her with supplies of bread, wine, meat, swine, sheep, and dried fruits and sent her to where the Admiral was with his people."

But before Mendez was able to secure this vessel, Ovando himself acted. One afternoon in March,—just before Bernal and his fresh batch of deserters were ready to abandon their companions,—a large caravel appeared off the entrance of Santa Gloria Bay. To the Admiral and his distressed associates she was, of course, the long-expected succor sent by Diego Mendez. Even when she came to, at some distance from their stranded hulks, and put off a boat, they suffered no diminution of their joy, for this was doubtless due to ignorance of the soundings. But when this boat drew near enough for her occupants to be distinguished, and the Admiral saw in her stern-sheets the figure of Diego de Escobar, whom he had condemned to death at the time of Roldan's rebellion, he began to fear some new complication. Nor was he mistaken. Escobar came near enough to the Admiral's queer craft to throw a letter on her deck, and then rowed off some distance and lay on his oars. From there he shouted a message from his master to the Admiral: The governor greatly sympathized with him in his trials, and sent him a barrel of wine and a side of bacon with his kind regards; just at the moment he could do no more, and he begged the Admiral to excuse his apparent neglect until he was able to send a vessel to bring the whole party to San Domingo! At this distance a conversation followed between Escobar and the Admiral in which the former re-

counted the latest news from Hispaniola, and assured his hearer that Ovando was paying especial heed to the Admiral's interests and had accumulated a large fund as his share of the island's revenue. What the real motive of Ovando was in this extraordinary performance has never been satisfactorily explained. The Admiral's friends accuse the governor of wishing merely to ascertain his real condition, and then abandon him to the death which was sure to come before long, and consider that Escobar was only carrying out a pre-arranged farce to quiet his victim's apprehensions. The more commonly received opinion is that Ovando feared to take the Admiral to San Domingo lest he should stir up dissension, and hand over the control of the Indies to Genoa or some other power. The persistence with which this last fable obtained in Court circles during the Admiral's lifetime, doubtless had its origin in his natural intimacy with the Genoese resident in Spain, and his known correspondence with the Signory of that commonwealth; but his repeated and logical denials leave no possible doubt as to its utter falsity. This seems, however, to have been his own interpretation of Ovando's unchivalric conduct, for in the reply he sent to the governor's message he wrote:—

“I beg you once more as a favor, Señor, that you may be satisfied regarding me and may rest assured that I am loyal. I ask you also, in your kindness, to receive becomingly Diego Mendez my messenger, and Fiesco,—who, as you know, is a man of high rank in his own country and who is so closely connected with myself,—and believe that they did not go to Hispaniola with ulterior aims, but only to inform you, Señor, of the imminent peril in which I then was and in which I continue at the present day. I am still lodged on the vessels which are stranded here, awaiting the assistance of God and yourself, for which my remote descendants will always bear a grateful remembrance.”

Unless we are prepared to believe that Ovando was a deliberate monster, we must suppose that he was genuinely afraid of the results of the Admiral's presence at San Domingo, and hence referred the whole matter to Spain for solution. Only thus can we account for the excessive dila-

toriness with which he acted. Some definite promise was indeed contained in the letter he sent to Columbus, for the latter in his reply thanks the governor with evident sincerity. "I have this moment received your letter, all of which I have read with great joy. Paper and pens would not suffice to write the comfort and courage which I and all these people with me have derived from it." At the same time the tone of the reply taken in its entirety is that of a man who is doubtful of its effect. "I am not smooth of speech," the Admiral writes, "rather am I considered abrupt; but the event, if it should occur, will show for itself." He recounts at length the chief incidents of his voyage, his existing straits, and renews his thanks for the hope of future aid held out by Ovando, and for the gratifying intelligence concerning his personal estate brought by Escobar. "I conclude by repeating that my faith has always been and is, Señor, that for my rescue you would venture even your own safety. I am so sure of this that all my senses concur in the belief." That Columbus had any such faith in the governor of Hispaniola would be incredible, were it not that a childish and irrational confidence in the sincerity of princes and cavaliers was the weakest point in his nature. His subsequent conduct indicates that he really did believe in the integrity of Ovando's intentions, and in the letter here quoted he sends an extract from their Majesties' instructions for this voyage, wherein they reiterate their purpose to respect all his rights and chartered dignities. "With or without this," he wrote, "ever since I began to serve them, I never harbored the thought of anything else." In his own transparent loyalty he supposed that Ovando and every one else must necessarily be guided by equally single motives. What object could any one have in being disloyal to princes who so generously and solemnly guaranteed his rights? The argument, he fancied, would be conclusive to Ovando.

Escobar waited only long enough to receive the Admiral's letter and then returned to his caravel and hoisted sail. Before darkness fell he had passed out of sight. His short stay and singular deportment naturally caused a profound

reaction among the little community on the twin hulks. Where all had been feverish joy in the afternoon, all was black despair at night. To them the departure of Escobar meant nothing less than the formal and official abandonment of them by Ovando. It was not without difficulty that they were persuaded to agree that the certainty of Mendez's arrival in Hispaniola and the assurances of the governor's ultimate assistance were causes for congratulation and confidence, but this hopeful view finally prevailed and all settled down to wait patiently for the now assured relief. The Admiral even thought the occasion was opportune for winning back the Porras faction, and sent messengers to inform them of the word brought by the caravel, and to offer them free pardon if they would return to their allegiance. His overtures were received as a confession of weakness and answered with a list of counter-propositions. It was the dreary comedy of Roldan reënacted among the forests of Jamaica, and most of the deserters' confidence was based upon the success which had attended Roldan's tactics. They overlooked the fact that the Admiral's hands were not tied on a savage island by the complications which fettered the Viceroy in an established colony of the Crown. Relying on their own strength, the feebleness of the Admiral's followers,—most of whom were known to be reduced by their long confinement,—and the existence of sympathizers on the ships, the mutineers discussed the advisability of seizing the Admiral, his son, and Don Bartholomew, and then treating with Ovando on their own terms. They seem to have imagined that their action might be even deemed meritorious in certain influential quarters.

On learning their plans the Admiral sent Don Bartholomew with fifty of his most trusted adherents to meet them. To renewed offers of pardon Porras replied with contemptuous rejection, and almost immediately attacked the Adelantado's company with a furious onslaught. But the fevers of Santa Gloria had not affected the courage of the Admiral's men, and their resistance was as obstinate as the attack. As pretty a fight ensued as the New World ever saw, common as such desperate affrays became in later years. Porras and



five of his comrades beset Don Bartholomew together and he at once became the centre of the battle. With a terrific blow the rebel leader cut through the Adelantado's shield to the handpiece underneath; but there his sword stuck, and, before it could be released, he was overpowered and captured. Pedro de Ledesma fell, only after receiving eight ghastly wounds which cut off his fingers, dislocated his sword arm, laid open his skull, severed the muscles of one leg, and divided one foot from heel to toes. Juan Sanchez, the luckless guardian of the Veraguan Quebi, and Juan Barba, who was the first to draw his sword against the bedridden Admiral on the 2nd of January, were more easily killed. Two or three more of the deserters came to a like end,<sup>1</sup> while many of them were wounded. Of Don Bartholomew's party only one, Pedro de Terreros, the loyal captain of the "Gallego," lost his life, and the Adelantado alone was wounded. Violent as the fighting was it was soon over, and the victors returned to the ships with Porras and other prisoners, while the vanquished fled to the woods with their wounded. In a couple of days they sent a messenger to announce their desire to surrender unconditionally. The Admiral at once accepted their proposal, and the survivors soon reached the ships. Their only punishment was an oath on crucifix and mass-book exacted from them, wherein they condemned themselves to merited death in this world and eternal damnation in the next, if they again violated their allegiance. It is a significant commentary upon the Admiral's reputed cruelty that when he learned from the Indians that Pedro de Ledesma, who had been left for dead by friend and enemy, was still alive on the battle field, he sent his surgeon with a party to bring him to the ships for treatment. And it is no less illustrative of the surgical art of those days that, for want of other means of cautery, the worthy physician poured oil on the valiant pilot's horrid wounds and then set it on fire! Notwithstanding which

<sup>1</sup> It is amusing to see the ingenuity with which Diego Porras, whose duty it was as comptroller to make a return of the crews upon reaching Spain, distributes these deaths over a number of days, as though due to climatic or other natural causes.

heroic measures Ledesma lived to bear false witness against his dead commander nine years later.

This battle — called of Mayma, from the Indian name of the place where it occurred — was fought on the 19th of May. Towards the end of June all discontent and doubts were set at rest by the appearance in the offing of two caravels. They proved to be the vessel bought and fitted out by Mendez, which was under the command of Diego de Salcedo, the Admiral's agent at San Domingo, and a smaller craft sent by Ovando for form's sake. Las Casas, who had personal knowledge of the facts, says that the governor was compelled by the public outcry which followed Escobar's return without the Admiral, to at least feign a disposition to help his shipwrecked colleague. For the moment, the latter cared little as to this; it was enough that he and his men were at last freed from their long exile. The preparations for departure were soon made, and on the 28th of June the two relief ships stood out of Santa Gloria Bay bound for San Domingo, and the only vestiges of the Spaniards' occupation of Jamaica were the double-hulled ark near the beach and the graves in the neighboring forest.

Salcedo had much to tell the Admiral, and did not lack for leisure in which to inform him thoroughly of all that had passed since he touched at Hispaniola two years before. The easterly winds and currents contested, as usual, the eastward course of the ships, and it was not until the 3rd of August that they reached the island of Beata, on the southern coast of Hispaniola. From here the Admiral sent a letter to Ovando, announcing his arrival and thanking him for his assistance. In it he recurs to the suspicions which, his agent told him, were still rife in the governor's circle.

"Every effort has been made," he repeats, "to kill once and for all the suspicion with which I am regarded, but Diego de Salcedo is still disturbed on this account. Occasion for this fear I know could neither have been seen nor heard, for my purpose is absolutely honest, and therefore I am surprised. I was as much gratified to see the signature of your last letter as though it were that of Don Diego or Don Fernando, my sons."

Notwithstanding this emphatic denial, the governor maintained his attitude of mental quarantine towards the Admiral. The latter reached San Domingo on the 13th of August, and was received with ceremonious distinction by Ovando, and with apparently more genuine rejoicings by the population at large, who treated the occasion as one of general festivity. He was lodged in the governor's mansion, and shown every outward mark of consideration, but underneath all ran a current of stubborn obstruction of all of his wishes by Ovando. The Admiral had brought Porras with him as a prisoner, to be tried in Spain for treasonous rebellion, under an indictment which had been prepared and witnessed in due legal form. Ovando released him at once, claiming that the Admiral's jurisdiction did not extend to Hispaniola. The Admiral sought a liquidation of his accounts, in accordance with Escobar's declarations and the assertions of his own recognized agent concerning the large balances to his credit. Ovando paid him a few thousand ducats, and alleged some trifling pretext for not making settlement in full. The Admiral looked for hearty coöperation in arranging for his return to Spain. Ovando did not lift his hand, but left his visitor to provide for the voyage out of his scanty resources. Various explanations have been advanced to whitewash Ovando's attitude and motives, and they are all needed. No quality was more common in those days among men of the standing of the Admiral and the governor than magnanimous courtesy. That and courage were the peculiar attributes of their caste. Ovando probably possessed the latter; but of the former he had not the faintest scintilla. Many a one among the savage caciques whom he had hung and burned could have shamed him in this respect.

Left to his own resources, the Admiral refitted the vessel bought by Mendez and chartered a second one. Many of his followers elected to remain in Hispaniola, and these he paid off. When, on the 12th of September, he stood out of San Domingo harbor,<sup>1</sup> he was well-nigh as penniless, so

<sup>1</sup> The fact that young Cortez was a resident of San Domingo or its vicinity at the time of the Admiral's last stay in that city has suggested

far as ready money went, as when he knocked at the portal of La Rabida thirteen years before.

The extraordinary ill-fortune which pursued Columbus at sea made no exception for this voyage. Soon after leaving port the Mendez caravel lost her mainmast and had to put back. Rather than delay his return to Spain, the Admiral continued his voyage with the remaining vessel. A succession of furious storms was encountered which nearly relieved both the King and Ovando of their troublesome claimant. The ship was so strained that her mainmast also went by the board,—fortunately after the worst of the gale was past. A jury-mast was rigged up under the Admiral's own directions, his sailor instincts proving stronger than the disease which kept him prisoner in bed. In a later storm the mizzenmast also was lost, and a rude substitute had to be found for that as well. At last, after nearly two months of struggle, the familiar coasts of Andalusia were sighted, and, on the 7th of November, the ship anchored in the harbor of San Lucar. In his impatience to reach Spain, and his perfect faith in the welcome which his sovereigns would extend to him and the tidings he brought of uncountable wealth, the Admiral thought little of the unkindness of the Ocean Sea. Had he realized that he had crossed it for the last time, he might have been impressed with the parallel between its treatment of him and that of those in whose service he had robbed it of all mystery.

the interesting possibility that the two great natures—so different and yet so like—may have met at this time. As the Admiral's malady was unabated, and he was confined to his bed most of the time, this seems hardly probable, unless the younger man sought the senior as a duty of courtesy; and this seems scarcely likely when we recall Cortez's disposition and tastes in those days.





#### XXIV.

“I HAVE DONE ALL I COULD.”

WHETHER Columbus would have been otherwise received had he escaped the long detention in Jamaica, and arrived home a year earlier, is an open question. That neither he nor any other discoverer, however vast or productive the distant regions they might have added to the Spanish dominions, could hope for more than a perfunctory hearing in the closing months of 1504 was simply a matter of course. Ferdinand himself was ill, was profoundly immersed in the crisis of his complex French and Italian schemes, and was harassed by the approaching entanglements attendant upon the succession to the Castilian throne of his demented daughter and her dearly hated husband Philip. Isabella was desperately and irretrievably sick, and the thoughts and schemes of the whole official body were centred upon her approaching end. The whole guidance of Indian affairs was necessarily left in the hands of the officers charged with their administration, and it was a mischance of old standing that Fonseca, Bribiesca, and other avowed ill-wishers of Columbus were those officers. Since his restoration to the full enjoyment of his rights, which had followed his return in 1496 and the collapse of the Boil-Margarite-Aguado cabal, the guarantees originally given him and then confirmed had been so completely ignored that nothing but a vigorous and inflexible exercise of the royal authority could restore them. Whoever would, could and did fit out expeditions to the Indies. A regular form of license and contract existed, by signing which any

one possessed of the means was entitled to go whither he wished, subject only to the avaricious scrutiny of his accounts and reports by the Indian Board when he returned to Spain. As for any participation by Columbus in the outcome of such expeditions, no one so much as gave it a thought. Some hazy claim was known to exist, but it was a matter of parchments; and he was an indifferent servant of the Crown who could not make an unwelcome contract read two ways. With regard to Hispaniola and its revenues, there was, indeed, less margin for dispute; but even here good ground could be found for endless disputation, and while it lasted all the proceeds passed into the royal coffers. None so well as Fonseca knew that the old Admiral's mainstay in past years had been the favor of the Queen, and that was as good as ended. The King might safely be trusted to restrain any spasm of unwise generosity should any such, by some miracle, find its way into his pre-occupied mind. Those who in past years had found it difficult to checkmate the Admiral's energetic and well-supported protests need not trouble themselves now at their renewal. Circumstances had changed at home as well as in the Indies.

It is not to be inferred that Columbus was without friends. He had many who were both influential and earnest in their desire to serve. But, in a personal government, a political situation such as then obtained in Spain paralyzed all the usual methods of securing executive interference. The ordinary channels of access to the throne were choked. Where the individual interests of the King were so deeply involved, the interests of any subject—or of all, for that matter—must bide his convenience. With the Queen dying, and her consort torturing his acute faculties to map out a safe course through the tangled web of European politics, the claims and quarrels of any individual in his kingdom would fall on deaf ears. By and by he would attend to them; whether in the way the claimant desired, or otherwise, remained to be seen.

Columbus failed to completely realize this, despite his long association with the Court. The justice of his pretensions,



the value of his past services, the certainty of his ability to perform others yet greater, and the vast importance of a wise administration of the empire over sea were all matters of imminent moment to his mind. The news of the Queen's desperate state was a cruel blow ; but it is doing him no more than justice to say that he grieved rather from his loyal devotion to her than from any motive of self-interest. Even in the event of her death his guarantees remained intact, and he persistently based his confidence in their final recognition upon the unanswerable strength of his contracts with the Crown. He saw that his immediate prospects of success were diminished by the existing condition of affairs at the Court ; but he feared that if he remained silent he would be utterly neglected in the clash of interests. It was impossible for him to wait personally upon Ferdinand, for the winter had set in with unusual severity, and his now unremitting malady kept him bedridden in Seville. In this emergency he decided to present his case through his son Diego, who, by reason of his attendance upon their Majesties, would be able to approach the King with greater freedom than any one not attached to his suite. To aid Diego he also arranged for his younger son, Fernando, and Don Bartholomew to set out some time in December for the Court, there to give an account of the voyage just ended, and lend such additional help as they could to the Admiral's cause. He counted much upon the unfailing friendship of Fray Diego de Deza, just elevated from the bishopric of Palencia to be archbishop of Seville and high in the royal confidence, and upon other of his sympathizers in the royal household. The better to submit prompt evidence of all that he might urge concerning his experiences, both recent and former, in Hispaniola, he had Diego Mendez, Alonso Sanchez de Carvajal, and some other of his personal followers, take up their residence at Court.

In making his appeal to Ferdinand, Columbus was acting upon positive assurances given by the King to Diego ; that his father's wrongs should be promptly righted, and the fullest justice done to his merits. As soon as he heard of the Admiral's arrival, Diego had so written to him, and it

was in reliance upon this latest evidence of the King's intentions that Columbus was acting. His object in gathering around his son a number of loyal partisans was to have an answer ready for the malicious representations sure to be made by his enemies, for he had no difficulty in ascertaining that Fonseca and his clique had sent Porras and other malcontents to pour their version of the Admiral's conduct into the ears of all who would listen.

From his chamber in Seville Columbus wrote weekly letters to his son, many of which have been preserved. They are marked by great earnestness, sincere affection, an absolute trust in the divine and royal justice, a profound conviction of the equity of his cause, and an outspoken detestation for the acts of his enemies. He gives carefully detailed instructions, as circumstances develop, as to the course to be pursued by his representatives, and dwells insistently upon the propriety of his demands. These were, (1) the restoration of his rank and prerogatives as Viceroy of the Indies; (2) the assignment to him of his proportion of the revenues from the Indian islands and mainland; (3) an adjustment of the accounts due him from Hispaniola; (4) the cancellation of all measures which infringed his guarantees. His thoughts were not merely selfish, for in his first instructions to Diego he especially directs him to secure at the earliest possible moment the payment of the moneys due the men who had returned with him. His own purse had been emptied by the payments made to those remaining in the Indies; but those who accompanied him were even more worthy. He could have provided enough gold for all such needs, he said, had he been willing to rob the people of Veragua; but this he would not do, because it would militate against the success of future Spanish colonies. A week later he renews his request, coupling in the same sentence with his anxiety to get their Majesties' response to his own appeal an urgent petition that they "should provide for the payment of these poor people, who have passed through incredible perils and are the bearers of such exalted tidings." The next week it is the same:—

"I spent the little money I received in the Indies in bringing these people who were with me to their homes: it would be a great load upon the conscience to have left them there uncared for. . . . Try and obtain their Majesties' reply to my letter, and that they pay these people."

So far as any analysis of a man's thoughts is possible, this "mercenary" visionary never contemplated his own distress that he did not consider that of his still poorer followers, and he urged their lesser claims with the same importunity as his own greater ones. In dwelling upon his persistency in the latter, his critics do not deem it necessary to refer to the former.

Until the news arrived of the Queen's death, which occurred on the 28th of November at Medina del Campo, Columbus had not abandoned hope of her recovery and the certainty of her beneficent influence in his behalf. With her death he changed instinctively his plan of action, and began to lay more stress upon the material side of his arguments, as if aware that this would have more effect upon Ferdinand than considerations of mere justice. His tribute to the Queen, in a minute written for Diego's use, shows the deep reverence he felt for her character: "Her life was always Catholic and saintly, ready for all that redounded to God's holy service, and for this we are bound to believe that she is in His holy glory, free from the care of this harsh and wearisome world." At the same time he dwells, for Ferdinand's benefit, upon the reckless maladministration of the Indies, declares that Ovando is disliked by all in his government, and shows how it would be possible to increase the revenue from that island by ten times. "They use here a proverb which says, 'The horse within its owner's sight grows fat,' " he significantly remarks.

". . . It is essential that his Majesty occupy himself with and study the preservation of those lands. People say it is on this account that he cannot furnish a good government for the whole of these Indies, and that they are worthless and do not yield the return it is right to expect. In my opinion it would be to his advantage if he should relieve himself somewhat of this by appointing some one who would suffer through their bad management."

The recommendations which he makes are sound and practical, the natural result of his experience, both fortunate and the reverse. There is abundant outside evidence to show that his charges, as well as his suggestions, were more than justified. That they were not written for selfish ends appears from the total absence of any allusion to his own pretensions in this paper. Considering that he had given thirteen years to the development of the Indies, it is not inconceivable that he might discuss their welfare in the abstract without obscuring the question with his own disputes.

Although Columbus wrote, "I am living on borrowed money," soon after he reached Seville, there is not evidence to support the assumption that he was in abject poverty. He did repeatedly enjoin upon Diego the necessity of economy, but it was because of the uncertainty as to when their share of the revenues would be received from San Domingo.

"Observe that it is very needful to watch them [the funds] carefully; because I had a quarrel with that governor, for everybody told me that I was entitled to 11,000 or 12,000 ducats, and I only received 4000. . . . So that although I possess moneys out there [in Hispaniola], there is no one who dares to demand them of the Governor on account of his haughtiness."

Among the numerous and wealthy Genoese merchants residing in Seville, he was apparently always able to obtain the funds required for his immediate needs and for remittance to his sons and Don Bartholomew. The basis of these advances was the obvious justice of his claims to the large sums already due him, rather than his indefinite future expectations. His expenses were large, with so many persons engaged in his interests, and his caution in restricting his outlays as much as possible was honorable. "I have already said how necessary it is to be careful with money," he wrote to Diego late in December, "until their Majesties give us a permanent settlement." Even in his own embarrassment he found means to help the neediest of his followers.

"The payment of these people who went with me has been delayed. I have supplied them here with what I could. They

are poor, and must set about earning a livelihood. They have decided to go to the Indies, and have been told that everything shall be done for them that is possible, as is only right, although there are among them some who deserve punishment rather than rewards."

The arrival in January of the regular fleet from San Domingo with no remittance for him greatly disquieted him, for he had counted upon receiving his tithe of the gold collected by the governor. "They brought much gold," he says, "but none for the Crown. So great a farce was never seen, for I left there 60,000 ducats already coined. His Majesty ought not to allow this great enterprise to slip through his hands as he does." As the prospect of receiving any portion of his dues from Ovando became more remote, he became more urgent for economy. "Look carefully after the expenditures, for it is necessary," is his injunction to Diego, after relating the arrival of the fleet. A little good-will on the part of the Indian Board at Seville would have removed all difficulties without committing the Crown in any way upon the main issues in dispute. No one dared say that the Admiral had no share in the revenue from the Indies. As a matter of fact he did have certain important sums to his credit; but on the pretext of unsettled accounts of past voyages, proper apportionment of various outlays between himself and the Crown, differences of interpretation as to what items were or were not to be deducted from the gross revenue before making division, and a score of such like quibbles as any keen clerk could easily invent, Fonseca succeeded in blocking the passage of a single maravedi from the Treasury to Columbus. There was, no doubt, great confusion in the accounts. The absurdity of charging the Admiral with every biscuit, needle, and fathom of rope which went into his several expeditions, and expecting him to account for them all at the end of a three years' cruise, gave ample opportunity for haggling. Who was to be charged with the loss of the four caravels on the last voyage, Columbus or the Crown? Who owed the families of the dead sailors? What became of all the merchandise furnished for barter? It was easy enough for

those who held the keys of the coffer to raise questions like these when pressed for settlement. But notwithstanding these pettifogging embarrassments Columbus seems to have continued to obtain such funds as he absolutely needed from his Italian compatriots. Poor he was, as compared with any honest computation of his dues, but he was not in the wretched misery so often depicted. His acknowledged claims were negotiable for part of their face, at least.

Nor was he deserted and despised during his long stay in Seville. In the occasional absence, for many days, of letters from his son, he would write chidingly but never unkindly, and more rarely would speak querulously or despondently of his position. The wonder is, that a man who had passed through what he had, and was now finishing his second year of confinement from the gout, could ever write cheerfully. Yet the general tone of his letters is chatty and even bright. If we read them without reference to the circumstances of their production, we may easily find phrases which, taken singly, are lugubrious enough; but read as a whole, with due regard to their author's situation, it would be hypercritical to characterize them as gloomy. Although so many of his immediate family were at Court, he was as much at home in Seville as anywhere, and he saw much of his friends, if we may judge from his allusions. He busied himself with trying to induce the officials of the Indian Board to adopt certain measures of such evident advantage to the Crown that they were at least carefully considered, and in the intervals of his attacks of pain he wrote a great deal. In response to some message or communication received from the Pope, he wrote an account of his voyage; of which he took pains to make a copy for Diego to show to the King and Fonseca "to avoid false reports." Some little attention was given to the "Book of the Prophecies," written in 1502, but it was soon laid aside. With ever punctilious attention to the preservation of the record of his grants and privileges intact, he sent to Genoa copies of his latest assurances from their Majesties, to be filed with his budget of privileges in the Bank of St. George, and did the same to the duplicate set in the hands of his friend Fray Gorricio.



His close sympathy with the priestly orders secured him much attention from them, and he interested himself in the selection of fitting men for the missionary sees it was proposed to create in Hispaniola. Finally, he was at the centre of geographical and commercial activity, and surrounded by many congenial spirits who thought none the less of the "old Admiral" because he was out of favor at Court and was living according to his means. We do not for a moment assume that the facts we have recited furnish any palliation for Ferdinand's neglect of Columbus. They merely go to show that the stout-hearted sailor did not fold his hands, and spend his days bemoaning his fate as some would have us believe.

There is throughout these letters a pervading tone of patient kindness which betokens a steadfast and generous spirit. To his son Diego he is always "Thy father who loves thee more than himself." "Make much of thy brother," he writes again; "he has a good disposition and has already given up youthful follies. Ten brothers would not be too many for thee: I myself never found better friend either at my right hand or at my left than my brothers." "Treat thy uncle with deference, as is right, and deal intimately with thy brother, as the older brother should with the younger. Thou hast no other, and, God be praised, he is such as thou hast much need of." He is careful to send messages of recognition in each letter to all his friends, sometimes with a special message of acknowledgment for services rendered. Diego Mendez, on returning from a visit, "carries his sack full of them." When the apothecary Bernal and a companion were about going to the Court with the avowed purpose of telling lies about him, the harshest comment he has to make is, "They are two creatures for whom God has done few miracles; if they go it will be rather to do harm than good." Terreros, the captain who was killed at Mayma, had made a will in favor of a comrade, and afterwards had cancelled it in favor of his own relations. The comrade tried to have the earlier one recognized, but was disconcerted by the production of the later one. The Admiral was appealed to to aid the rightful

heirs. He writes to his son, "I will take out an order of justice and send it to him, for I believe it will be a labor of mercy to punish him." Even of the Porras brothers he speaks with moderation, albeit with unmistakable indignation. After reciting their revolt and the impossibility of securing a trial of Francisco, the leader, he reverts to the fact that they are going to Court to join the cabal working against him. "I should not wonder if God punished them," he writes. "They have gone there with their shamelessness." One of the last letters we have from his hand is a request to his son to try and obtain the royal pardon for two condemned criminals for whom his sympathies had been aroused. "Arrange that Diego Mendez places this petition with the other appeals for pardon which are given to his Majesty in Holy Week. If it should be granted then, it is well; if not, try and secure it in some other way." There was nothing of saintly meekness about him, but neither was there any of that petty vindictiveness which would have been so natural to smaller natures.

The most singular incident in the whole course of his detention at Seville was unmistakably his utilization of Americus Vespucci as an additional witness to the propriety of his claims. Vespucci had been summoned to the Court for consultation in connection with some maritime project; his admirers think by reason of his great skill as a navigator and explorer, but the records rather intimate because of his experience as a purveyor of supplies. Before leaving Seville, where he was living for the time being, he met the Admiral. It is likely that the two men met frequently, indeed, for their acquaintance was of long standing, and the Florentine had much to learn from the Genoese. In what respect the former might be of service to the latter, it is difficult to see. He might have some knowledge, from his connection with the outfitting of the earlier expeditions, of the Admiral's financial disputes with the royal comptrollers; or he might have been able to testify to some incident of importance, as the result of his voyage with Hojeda. Be that as it may, Columbus, on the 5th of February, 1505, wrote to his son as follows:—

"My dearest son : Diego Mendez left here Tuesday, the 3rd of this month. After he left I talked with Americus Vespucci, the bearer of this letter, who goes to the Court, called thither by some affairs of navigation. He has always had the wish to do me pleasure, and is a very honest man. Fortune has been adverse to him, as to so many others ; his labors have not availed him as much as he had a right to expect. He is going at my [request] and with a great desire to do something which shall redound to my benefit, if it should be within his powers. I do not know at this distance in what I can employ him which shall be to my advantage, because I do not know for what he may be wanted there, but he goes determined to do for me everything that should be possible. Do you see there in what he can be of advantage, and put it in shape, for he will say and do all that is needful and will carry it out ; only let it all be done secretly, so that he may not be suspected. I have told him all that it is possible to say concerning this matter, and informed him of the recompense made to me and that which is still making. This letter is for the Adelantado as well, so that he may see what is desirable and advise him [Vespucci]. His Majesty may believe that his ships have been in the best part of the Indies and the wealthiest, and if anything remains to be done to prove this I will satisfy him of it at the Court, for it is impossible to do it in writing."

The effort to extol Vespucci at the expense of Columbus has given employment to many and skilful pens, with what must be admitted to be, on the whole, a negative result. Without venturing into this endless controversy, we have copied the Admiral's letter for the purpose of allowing a comparison between the tone of his allusions to Vespucci and the single reference extant in which the latter refers to the Admiral. When we add that two years before this letter was written Vespucci had already claimed, in his own letters to Soderini, to have discovered Brazil, and the suggestion had already been advanced that the southern continent, discovered by Columbus, should be called America in honor of the man who merely followed the dozen others who had preceded him since the Admiral showed the way, the mystery which surrounds this letter deepens. Whatever may be the ultimate solution, the letter itself bears witness to the unbounded generosity and simplicity of its writer.

With the advent of spring Columbus felt able to undertake the journey to Segovia, where the King and his Court were. Several times during the winter he had attempted to start from Seville, but each effort failed by reason of the effect of the intense cold upon his frail health. When he did set out he had to travel in a mule-litter, for which a special license was procured, and the journey was both tedious and painful. The Court was reached in May. His reception by the King was amiable but not cordial. Considering the attitude which Ferdinand had assumed towards his partner in the Indian venture, this is not surprising. The Admiral gave an account of his discoveries, of the resources of Veragua, of the many difficulties encountered during the voyage and of its disastrous ending. To all of these the King gave interested attention; but it was not the quick, responsive enthusiasm with which he had listened to earlier recitals from the same lips. Finally, when the Admiral touched upon the vital question,—the restoration of his dignities and emoluments,—the King repeated his suave and well-worn generalities about doing justice and recompensing his servant in proportion to his distinguished services. As a fact, Columbus had not advanced his cause a jot; but his old spirit of reverential loyalty was aroused, and he felt that the King's own sacred words must necessarily be followed by some fitting act. When enough time had elapsed and no result was apparent, he handed Ferdinand a memorial couched in that tone of singular frankness which distinguishes all of his communications to his sovereigns:—

"Now my undertaking begins to open the door, and shows that it is and will be what I always have said. Your Majesty is most Christian; I and all those in Spain and in the whole world who have knowledge of my deeds will believe that your Majesty, who honored me at the time when you had no experience with me except words, now that you see the result will renew to me, with increase, the rewards you have given me, as you promised me by word and in writing and by your signature. If you do this, rest assured that I will serve you the few days of life which Our Lord shall give me."

The King admitted then, as he did to Diego after the Admiral's death, that he owed the Empire of the Indies to the petitioner. He confessed that the Admiral was entitled to all that had been promised him. But, he objected, there were all those questions of conflicting interpretation to be decided before he could carry out his honest and right royal intentions towards the Admiral: would it not be well to submit these to the arbitration of some learned and impartial person? To this the Admiral promptly assented and suggested Fray Diego de Deza, Archbishop of Seville, as an arbiter acceptable to himself and one whose devotion to the Crown was notorious. The King was not unwilling to leave the matters in dispute to the prelate's award; but at the first attempt to agree upon the questions to be arbitrated an incurable divergence arose. Everything relating to his pecuniary interests and shares Columbus was willing to leave to be determined, after debate; but all that touched his rank and prerogatives was sacred and exempt from discussion. Viceroy and Perpetual Governor of the Indies he was as surely as Admiral of the Ocean Sea. No one disputed the latter title, and the former was an integral part of one and the same guarantee. "The governorship and control in which I was are the foundation of my honor," he said on a later occasion, and his whole contention is epitomized in the phrase. Whether his tithe of the Indian revenue was chargeable upon the net or gross amount thereof; whether a certain part of some, and the whole of other expenses were to be paid by him; whether his pecuniary rights extended only over Hispaniola and the other islands or over the whole mainland as well,—all these and their like he would admit to argument. Money he needed, and badly, for his daily wants; without his share of the future revenues of the Indies his grandiose but earnest project for recovering the Holy Sepulchre must be abandoned; unless they received at least a generous portion of it, his sons could not carry out his charitable designs; all this, however, he would make dependent upon the decision of a referee. But his dignities and their prerogatives were *res adjudicata*. The last word had been said as to them when

the King and Queen ratified their conditional grant of his honors after his ample fulfilment of the task upon which they were conditioned.

Finding the Admiral obdurate on this point, the King returned to his old tactics of procrastination. From the fragmentary testimony which remains, it is evident that the whole dreary wrangle, from the days of Soria's and Bribiesca's quarrel in 1493 down to the question of jurisdiction with Ovando in 1504, was gone over by the Admiral's opponents as furnishing arguments to rebut his own. Ferdinand was deeply preoccupied with his other interests of person and State; having determined to contest the Admiral's claims he could not give much time to the discussions which followed, and they were necessarily left to his councillors. Twice they were laid before the "commission for the discharge of the Queen's conscience,"—a board sitting to consider reclamations brought against them as representing the late Queen,—and both times they were remanded without action. To provide an easy solution, the King recurred to the suggestion made Columbus in 1496, and offered him a Spanish title and estate adequate to maintain it; but the Admiral declined to consider the proposal. He did not wish the rank for its own sake, or the revenue for the sake of living at ease. To him the Indies were a direct gift from the Almighty, and their revenues for all time to come were solemnly pledged for certain defined and beneficent purposes. Only in the hands of himself or his delegates could these holy trusts be properly administered, and he knew, if no one else did, what proportions they would attain in the future. He was far from ignoring the worldly aspect of his interests; one of the clearest indications of the far-seeing appreciation with which he regarded the vast scope of his discoveries, is the tenacity with which he contended for the *perpetual* nature of his vested rights. But that this was secondary to his grand schemes of religious and political regeneration, is definitely shown by the disposition made in his will of the revenues to accrue from the wide realms he had thrown open to civilization and the true faith. His ambition to raise his family



to the front rank of European subjects was as keen as it was legitimate; but he looked upon them in the remotest generations as pledged to follow the injunctions laid down in his testament. It was all lamentably unbusiness-like, but it was all desperately sincere.

The time came, at last, when he could no longer maintain so unequal a contest. It had not been waged single-handed, for, besides the devoted assistance of his own personal circle, he had the active sympathy of powerful friends, including the great Ximenez, Archbishop of Toledo. But even with all his support, the King's policy of temporizing was bound to win where the defendant was a bed-ridden invalid, broken with years of privation, hardship, and mental stress. Rather than continue in an obviously fruitless struggle, Columbus made a final appeal to Ferdinand. Since the overwhelming evidence of his probity and loyalty availed nothing, and since the ample and indisputable guarantees given him in the past were ignored, he would ask for himself only to be allowed to retire in peace to "some corner" where he could rest secure from the contentions and persecutions forced upon him by tireless enemies. The quarrel was against him personally; he would end it by effacing himself. Then there could be no pretext for opposition to the righteous enforcement of his stipulated rights in the person of his son and heir, as explicitly provided in the royal agreements.

"Most humbly do I beseech your Majesty," ran his petition, "that you command that my son be instated, in my stead, in the rank and enjoyment of the authority in which I was, which so nearly touches my honor. In all the rest, let your Majesty act as to you seems fit; I shall be grateful for whatever it is. For I believe that the anguish caused by this prolonging of my settlement is chiefly what keeps me thus crippled by disease."

With this request he submitted a memorial defending himself from some of the worn-out charges, and particularly denying that of undue severity towards the natives of Hispaniola. He pointed to the atrocities permitted, if not practised, by Bobadilla and Ovando, and challenged a comparison with the condition of the island under his much-

berated administration. "Although I sent many of them to Spain and they were sold there," he admits, referring to the Indians, "it was with the intent that they should be taught in our holy faith, our arts, trades, and habits, and afterwards returned to their own land to instruct others there." He might have added that the King had been glad to pocket the proceeds of this questionable missionary experiment, and was still receiving a share of the slaves brought to Spain from the now frequent Indian expeditions. Don Diego presented a petition at the same time, asking for the fulfilment of his father's privileges in his person, and offering to be guided in all his acts as Viceroy by such counsellors as the King should appoint.

Nothing came of this final attempt to secure justice except a fresh crop of protestations, promises, and delays.<sup>1</sup> The King was patching up an alliance with his brother of France, and already preparing to wed a successor to the dead Isabella as an important step in his complicated diplomacy. His crazy daughter and her husband were about to come to Spain from Flanders to occupy the Castilian throne, and Ferdinand was bent on keeping Aragon and Naples for himself. He had even less leisure than inclination to study an entirely new chapter of the controversy with his stubborn Admiral. Columbus seems to have realized as much. The malady which he had so long resisted was gaining upon him now by perceptible degrees. It could not break his courage, but it did sap his powers of resistance. In a letter to his old ally and friend, Archbishop Deza, he virtually relinquished the long and heart-breaking struggle.

"Since it appears that his Majesty does not consider it best to comply with what he has promised by word and contract,

<sup>1</sup> A good deal of light is thrown upon Ferdinand's motives by a remark he made to Diego Columbus some time after the Admiral's death. Diego was urging upon the King his claims as the Admiral's heir: "Look you, Admiral," replied Ferdinand, "I may readily have every confidence in you, but have none at all in your heirs or successors." To which Diego answered, appositely enough: "Sire, is it right that I should suffer for the sins of sons and heirs whom I may never have?" Las Casas gives the story as told him directly by the young Admiral.

together with the Queen (who is in glory), I feel that to battle for a contrary decision would be for me, who am but a rude laborer, to flog the wind. Therefore it is best, since I have done all I could, to leave the result now to God, Our Lord. I have ever found Him favorable and ready to help my necessity."

The old sailor had struck his flag; but when we think of the magnitude of the hopes and ambitions he was relinquishing there does not seem to have been much that was "hysterical" or "maudling" in his capitulation.

The steady advance of his illness, unchecked now by any sustaining hope, warned the Admiral that the end was not far off. On the 25th of August, being then in Valladolid, whither the Court had gone from Segovia, he drew up with his own hand a codicil to the will executed in 1498. In this document, after reaffirming minutely the order of succession to be observed in the descent of his titles and estates, and enjoining his heirs to respect the obligations of the earlier will, he readjusts the income to be drawn by his sons and brothers from the estate, "because up to the present there has been no revenue from the said Indies." Although he refers to his contracts with and privileges from the Crown, there is not a word of bitterness or censure. He does say in speaking of the Indies, "It seems as though I, by the will of God Our Lord, gave these to them [the King and Queen], as though they were something of my own, so to speak, since I importuned their Majesties concerning them, when they were unknown and the road to them was concealed from all who ever spoke of them"; but in saying this he was merely stating an historical fact, to explain why their Majesties made the agreement of Granada with him. The remainder of the codicil is without especial interest, except the often discussed reference to Doña Beatriz Enriquez, and the preference he expresses, in endowing a chapel in Hispaniola, for the site of Conception in the Vega, because he there called on the Virgin when in extremity; an allusion, apparently, to his battle with the allied tribes in 1494. With scrupulous exactness he adds to the codicil a list of small debts to be repaid sundry Genoese and Jews in Portugal, running back to 1482, when

he was a poor map-maker in Lisbon. "This is to be done in such manner that they shall not know who has ordered it done," he charges. In the depth of his disappointment, he was reviewing his whole life and trying to square all accounts before it was too late.

The last months of the Admiral's life are an utter blank in the records which have survived. The winter of 1505-6 opened with Ferdinand preparing for his second nuptials, and for the arrival of his daughter and her husband to share with him the Spanish throne. To meet Juana and Philip he left Valladolid sometime after the New Year, and journeyed to Laredo, on the Bay of Biscay. Columbus was unable to stir from his couch; but he sent Don Bartholomew to represent him at the reception of the new sovereigns and to hand to them his own letter of welcome. It was written apparently in April, when the tide of courtiers was setting northward to hail their future rulers; but there is little of festivity in its tone of measured despondency.

"I am certain that your Majesties shall believe," ran the Admiral's last letter, "that at no past time have I had so great a desire for personal health as I have had since I knew that your Majesties were going to come hither by sea, that I might go and serve you with the experience and knowledge of navigation which I may possess. It has otherwise pleased Our Lord; wherefore I most humbly entreat your Majesties that you count me in the number of your royal subjects and servants, and rest assured that, though this illness assails me now in this pitiless fashion, I can still render services beyond any which have yet been seen.

"These difficult times and other afflictions in which I have against all justice been placed, have brought me to great extremity; for this cause I have not been able to go to your Majesties, nor has my son. Very humbly I beg that you may accept the intention and desire, as of one who hopes to be restored to his rank and estate as my patents guarantee."

What service the writer contemplated rendering his new sovereigns cannot even be conjectured. It would be natural for him to plan a voyage into the remote South, to determine once and for all the extent of the continent which little by little was being shown to be so vast. That he had some such prospect awaiting his restoration to health is clear,

and that he counted upon finding in Isabella's daughter a revival of the protection which the mother had vouchsafed him. Those who were in a position to know believed that in this he would not have been disappointed. The favorable reception accorded Don Bartholomew by Queen Juana and her husband, and their kind verbal reply to the Admiral's letter support the probability.

Whether Columbus knew of the friendly disposition expressed by their Majesties is uncertain. They arrived at Corunna at the end of April; but it may readily have been several days later that Don Bartholomew had his audience, and the road to Valladolid was neither short nor smooth. If the tidings did not reach the Admiral early in May, they would have been only an added bitterness, for by the middle of the month it had become apparent that neither rank nor revenue would avail him anything. On the 19th of May he called in Pedro de Hinojedo, a notary of the city, and confided to him the codicil drawn in August, to be duly certified and recorded.<sup>1</sup> Nine of the Admiral's friends and retainers witnessed this acknowledgment, among them being Bartolomé de Fiesco, the courageous companion of Diego Mendez. The testator was described in the certificate as being "ill of body," but no other intimation is given of his real condition. On the next day, May the 20th, being the festival of Ascension, he was so low that the sacrament was administered to him. At least one of his sons, Diego, several of his friends, and a number of his body-servants were with him. What scenes passed in the closing hours of that eventful life have never been disclosed, and we only know that he was conscious when the end came. Repeating the words of the Psalmist, "Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit," the old Admiral entered upon his last and longest voyage into the Unknown.

The limitations of character which stamped Columbus as a man among men and not a demi-god are as apparent to all who study his life as are his preëminent deeds.

<sup>1</sup> The notary was evidently familiar with the disputes between his client and the Crown, for he adds the words "which he said he was," after the recital of the Admiral's titles of Viceroy and Governor-General.

Since he made no effort to conceal them, it is superfluous for us to attempt the task. Few men have taken less pains to pose as paragons than did this one, conscious though he was that his achievements would command the admiration of future generations. The interests of historical truth may properly demand that a man's nature should be faithfully portrayed; but they cannot be served either by the exaggeration of his shortcomings or that of his services to humanity. To claim that the world's truly great are flawless, and to deny to all who are not a title to the plaudits of succeeding ages, is to narrow the heroes of humanity to a number not encouraging to those who have faith in the elevation of their kind. We do not exhaust our critical faculties in detecting and magnifying the shortcomings of the contemporaries of Columbus,—of Luther, Copernicus, Michael Angelo, Da Vinci, or Raphael,—although no one of them was free from the weaknesses of the flesh. In what respect shall we be benefited, or his fame be impaired, when we have proven to our own satisfaction that the dauntless explorer possessed his share of the errors common to the clay of which we are all made? In no single instance did he pretend otherwise.

The general accusations which are brought against him,—of avarice, cruelty, misgovernment, nepotism, and the like,—are as old as the great voyage of 1492. Twice in his lifetime and once afterward, these were brought forward, prosecuted with venomous perseverance, and dismissed for want of foundation. It is only common fairness to hold a man absolved from charges thrice preferred and thrice refuted by a tribunal of ultimate appeal. When Columbus returned from Hispaniola in 1496, the vehement assertions of the Boil-Margarite-Aguado cabal were utterly disproved, and the King and Queen heaped fresh honors upon him in compensation for their momentary distrust. In 1502, when he appeared before them in Bobadilla's fetters, pursued by a tireless persecution, his sovereigns, in their instructions to Ovando, and their emphatic condemnation of Bobadilla and Roldan, vindicated completely the Admiral's administration, although they took selfish advantage of the injuries done him. Finally, years after he was



dead, when the Council of the Indies at the petition of his son took cognizance of those claims which the Admiral had so persistently urged upon Ferdinand's consideration, its learned and independent members were compelled to admit that his reclamations were well grounded and his rights explicit. Those who care to read the evidence, pro and contra, submitted to the Council, may find there all the criticisms and censures with which in later years we have become familiar as the fruit of some modern methods of historical analysis. Several unlettered mariners from the ports of Andalusia,—and especially those who testified from hearsay,—anticipated the labors of certain later historians in trying to prove that the "old Admiral" did not amount to nearly as much as some deluded people supposed.

Yet it is difficult to point to a single important discovery within the quarter of a century following the death of Columbus in which his direct,—not remote,—influence is not apparent. We have already traced the intimate connection between his explorations and the finding of Brazil, the coasts of the Spanish Main and Yucatan, and shown that Cortez was guided to Mexico by a pupil of the great discoverer. On turning over the contemporary records of other voyages we shall find that Cuba was first circumnavigated by Sebastian del Campo, another disciple; the Gulf of Mexico coasted and the Mississippi found by Garay, a trusted subordinate; the Isthmus of Panama crossed, and the Pacific descried by an expedition in which other followers of the Admiral figured; and, finally, the voyage of Magellan and the conquests of Pizarro shared by men who had served their apprenticeship under the great explorer. In all of these and many lesser exploits, there will be found some link binding them to the theories and teachings of him who, to use Las Casas's simile, found the thread leading up to the ball of twine. When we bear in mind the innumerable reports, letters, arguments, and maps which Columbus is known to have prepared but which have never been found, the extraordinary activity of his mind and the accuracy of his deductions, it is not difficult to believe that those who had access to the full record of his researches possessed therein a mine of geographical inspiration.

Columbus is entitled to no special pleading. He is to be judged by his record, precisely as are Ferdinand, Fonseca, Bobadilla, and Ovando. In his case the record is singularly full and clear, actions and motives alike being set forth with transparent simplicity. Whether they were laudable, or the reverse, each investigator may decide for himself. The controversy as to his character and purposes is not a modern one, as appears from the reflections of Oviedo and Gomara. To his own contemporaries it did not occur either to ascribe to him immunity from mortal error, or to look upon him as a moral pariah. None of his critics has been more severe upon him than was his associate Las Casas, in respect of his attitude toward those natives who did not meekly accept the Spanish rule. But although the devoted Protector of the Indians often scores the Admiral unsparingly, he did not feel constrained to brand him as deficient in every quality that goes to make a man. Here is his deliberate judgment of the Admiral's character, written after many years of intimate association with the very men who had contributed most of the material upon which later criticism is founded:—

"Don Christopher Columbus . . . was affable and cheerful, well-spoken, and eloquent, grave in moderation, amiable with strangers, courteous and mirthful with those of his household; preserving a modest dignity, but given to discreet conversation, so that he readily won the affection of those who knew him. He possessed the manner and appearance of one entitled to veneration, of high rank and authority and worthy of all respect. He was sober and temperate in eating, drinking, and dress. When speaking lightly with any one in familiar discourse, or when reproving any one in anger, he was used to say 'I give you to God, does not it seem so to you?' or, 'why did not you do so and so?' He was learned in astronomy, deeply skilled in navigation, knew Latin and composed verses.

"In the observances of the Christian religion he was an earnest Churchman, of notable devotion. Almost everything he said or did he always prefaced with 'In the name of the Holy Trinity I will do this.' In every letter or paper he wrote he placed at the head 'Jesus, His Cross and Mary be with us on the way.' His oath occasionally was, 'I swear by St. Ferdinand.' When wishing to affirm anything with solemnity in his letters, especially those to his sovereigns, he said, 'I take my oath that this is the truth.' He observed the fasts of the Church

most scrupulously, confessed and communed often; recited all the canonical prayers; was much opposed to blasphemy and profane swearing, and deeply devoted to Our Lady and the Holy St. Francis. . . . He was very zealous for the honor of God and very anxious for the conversion of the Indians and that the faith of Jesus Christ should be extended. He was singularly devoted to the hope that God should make him worthy to do something towards the recovery of the Holy Sepulchre.

"He was a man of lofty soul, valiant, of high aims, especially inclined, as may be gathered from his life, deeds, writings, and conversation, to undertake preëminent and singular exploits; patient and long-suffering; a forgiver of injuries; one who desired nothing more, — according to what is related of him — than that those who wronged him should recognize their errors and become reconciled with him. He was most constant and forbearing in the trials and adversities which constantly beset him and which were incredible and endless; maintaining always a perfect trust in Divine Providence. And of a surety, both from what I heard from himself and from my own father and the other persons who accompanied him when he returned to colonize the Island of Hispaniola in 1493, — he cherished and retained always an affectionate loyalty and devotion for his sovereigns."

One who gains in the battle of life such victories as were given to Columbus to win, and who leaves behind him such an impression even upon those with whom he disputed upon vital issues of right and wrong, does not need the intemperate applause of "canonizers," and cannot suffer by the censure of professed iconoclasts. Either he was what Las Casas portrays, or he was what his modern accusers would have us believe; a maundering, hypocritical sentimentalist, besotted with ambition and sordid avarice, who, by the grace of Fortune and the Trade Winds, stumbled upon our western world while leading a filibustering expedition to the eastern shores of Asia. If this is all there was in his career to command our consideration, the sooner we erect statues to Juan Rodrigues Bermejo and Alonzo Perez, who with corporeal vision first espied the sands of Guananí and the peaks of Trinidad, the more quickly shall we do merited honor to historical truth.











YC130475

YC130475





